MADEMOISELLE

DE LA FAYETTE;

OR, THE

AGE OF LOUIS XIII.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY

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MADEMOISELLE DE LA FAYETTE;

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THE AGE OF LOUIS XIII.

WHEN the Marchioness de Beaumont had finished her history, Mademoiselle de la Fayette took up the discourse, and said, that it did not appear to her so difficult as she thought to conquer those obstacles which were opposed to her union with Saint Ibal. There was little to effect after, if the ambition of this unworthy father, the Count de Melcy, could be satisfied with the friendship of the queen, that of the Count de Soissons, and the good will of the king; was that an impossible achievement? "I have well

reflected," replied the marchioness, "and I am without hope: first, the queen can do nothing; secondly, the Count de Soissons is not regarded by the cardinal, and has no interest; lastly, the Count de Melcy, by the powers of intrigue, has obtained every honour which can insure a brilliant life at court.

Those who have done much service to the state are often insatiable after honours, because these distinctions serve as future trophies of renown, and become also titles of glory; in which posterity trace the remembrance of their great actions.

When a new favour is accorded to the Count de la Meilleraye, in it is recalled an infinity of glorious exploits. When the Count de Melcy obtains an offering from the court, many ill-naturedly recount some anecdotes, either true or false, concerning the intrigue that has purchased it. And this is because ambition, in an intriguer destitute of sterling merit, always degenerates into avarice; honor cannot support it. The Count de

Melcy is such a being, it is wealth that he wishes, it is solely wealth that he desires. He will only marry his son to a woman sufficiently rich to content him, by a certain inheritance, but who will require no actual sacrifice; to a woman sufficiently credulous to be dazzled by his pompous airs, his gaudy magnificence, his important and solemn tone, and his affected intimacy with the ministers with whom he flatters himself he is thought the friend, because no person in the world pays them more assiduously an habitual court; which, when continued with constancy, induces the supposition of being in great esteem and credit in a country where every thing is attributed to interest."

"But," replied Mademoiselle de la Fayette, "cannot the king give a portion to a person who interests him? If ever I acquire any influence over his mind, the first use I shall make of it will be to implore his generosity for the benefit of my friend."

"No," interrupted the marchioness, "you will make a more worthy use of that influence of which you speak, you will employ it only for the glory of the king, and for the good of the state: Saint Ibal and myself have no right to such benefactions. The Cardinal de Richelieu will oppose excellent reasons to such ill-placed liberality. The king, naturally equitable, would reflect upon it at a time above all in which war and the state of the finances will not allow him to recompense, even as many old soldiers as have valiantly fought. Finally, the king would take ill a demand so unreasonable; he would esteem you less for it; the attempt would miscarry, you would lose your own credit without being able to serve me. Besides, you have pledged me your word to preserve faithfully my secret, thus you can take no proceedings relative to this secret except with my consent, and I explicitly refuse it on this point."

At these words, Mademoiselle de la Fayette embraced her friend, she was

convinced that her reflections were perfectly just, and she praised her principles and her disinterestedness.

"Thus it is," said the Marchioness de Beaumont: "I shew only common sense; but such is the advantage of having some reasonable friends—such do not engage in false chimeras, they ask only useful services; and it is these who make less importunate and more disinterested ones appear only inconsiderate and heedless."

"Ah!" replied Mademoiselle de la Fayette, sighing, "I shall never perhaps have occasion to profit by your judicious counsels. In the midst of the cares of war, the king will doubtless forget me, and I shall no longer find him at his return the same!"

"No, no, you could never be forgotten, and the king is constant in his friendship; he is only detached when he has found himself deceived. I confess, I should regret it. There is nothing failing in him, I am assured, to constitute a great monarch,

only to know the truth, and to be able to reckon on the disinterestedness and attachment of the person capable of discovering it to him; but he is mistrustful, after so many fatal proofs he ought to be so. Will he believe me?"

"We believe as soon as we love."

Mademoiselle de la Fayette did not combat the justness of this maxim; her heart confirmed it.

However news of the army was soon received, announcing brilliant success obtained by the valour of the king, and that of the French troops. We have since seen exploits a thousand times more astonishing, but in no time have we witnessed a martial ardour more universally spread than that which then existed in France. Two princes of the church, cardinals, were named among the most intrepid warriors (1); and the glory of bearing arms under the orders of their king, and to defend their country, not only sheltered them from ridicule, but (in an age so religious) has shielded them from the

blame that would have attached to priests transformed into soldiers.

At the court they spoke only of arms and of the king: in this moment of glory and of peril Louis XIII. was no longer the weak and uncivilized prince who usually was so little remarked; he was a brilliant monarch, and worthy of the throne—he was represented in the midst of perils at the head of his troops; the prayers of all were for him—he was beloved, admired, he reigned.

Each day of absence and each new intelligence added a degree of exaltation to the sentiments of Mademoiselle de la Fayette for the king. The purity of her soul assured her security: this attachment could not alarm her ideas; it had nothing in common with love.

The dangers of Louis made her shudder; but certain that he was about to hold the reins of government, and to display a great character, it was for France that she trembled. She wished with ardour his return, not for the fri-

volous pleasure of seeing him and conversing with him of herself, but to speak to him of his duties, to elevate his soul, to inspire him with generous resolutions, and to impress them in him. Such were, at least, the thoughts and the illusions of Mademoiselle de la Fayette.

At last every one with transport learnt the glorious end of the campaign. The king took some places where the Spaniards were assembled, and these last, completely conquered, were obliged to repass the Somme; on another side the Imperialists, who had penetrated into Burgundy, were driven even to the Rhine by the Cardinal de la Valette and the Duke de Weimar.

Who has ever been able to resist the French commanded by able generals? And do we not know, even in the present day, that the captain who would have sufficient courage and genius to propose to such soldiers exploits beyond all that history has transmitted to us, even of the most miraculous, would

find no obstacles, and that intrepid warriors, worthy of receiving his magnanimous orders, would execute them without even shewing that astonishment which might be expected from them at such prodigies.

Nation, heroic as brilliant! who alone, in the midst of all the people of the earth, seem to be sheltered from the decline, which often follows a long career of success, and which, after having grown old in glory, not only preserves its pre-eminence, but is still elevated by an *eclât* that was never before seen, and by some unheard-of triumphs!

The king returned; even fears had been entertained for Paris itself, and this sovereign heretofore so little beloved, was received with transport. Mademoiselle de la Fayette, a witness of this universal joy, saw in Louis only the worthy successor of Henry the Great, and the inheritor of all his glory. In the intoxication of such illusions, she thought that now even

the advice of friendship would be useless, and that of his own accord he would repress the haughtiness of Richelieu, lower this potent usurper, and resume royal authority.

The king, the day after his arrival, received all the court, and the whole body of the state. He spoke with grace and dignity. In the evening he was at the circle of the queen; he was then charming, full of affability, and he found means to prove, by a thousand delicate assiduities of manner to Mademoiselle de la Fayette, that he was more engrossed by her than ever.

This very evening, Mademoiselle de la Fayette, though, as usual, in mourning, and keeping her vow, was still, without any ornament, enchanting; her countenance was so animated, her complexion so dazzling, her beauty had something in it so touching, that every one was struck with admiration.

It was on this evening that the sentiments of the Count de Soissons and of

the Count de Meilleraye were visible for her.

Saint Ibal, who was behind Mademoiselle de la Fayette, said to her quite low, "Do you wish to know to what excess jealousy and envy can disfigure a beautiful woman? Cast your eyes on Madame la Duchesse de Montbazon—examine her when she looks at you."

"And whence can this jealousy arise?"

"Are you ignorant then of her pretensions over the heart of the Count de Soissons?"

"I see nothing of all that," replied mademoiselle, with perfect abstraction." In fact, she saw only one object.

The next morning Louis was with the queen, remained some minutes, and staid only an instant in the apartment of the maids of honor. The king approached Mademoiselle de la Fayette, addressed her with some obliging expressions, and afterwards, leading her aside, he said to her, "I know not yet when I shall be able to renew those interviews which are

so dear to me; for after an absence of many months, I find myself overwhelmed with business."

"Ah! so much the better," cried Mademoiselle de la Fayette; "I would, sire, you were always thus occupied."

The king smiled. "Yet you often hear me condemned for being indolent," he replied; "but I have asked you to suspend your opinion, and to judge of me only after having understood me."

"Ah, sire! why wait for that, when the heart can foresee all?"

"May yours always justify me, it will not deceive you, and I shall be consoled for much of injustice."

After having pronounced these words with a tenderness which touched Mademoiselle, even in the recesses of her soul, the king left the apartment.

The living in camps, the movements of war, successes, ideas of glory, universal praise, a tender rising passion, all were at this moment united to draw Louis from his habitual indolence. He an-

nounced to the cardinal that he wished to devote himself to public affairs. The cardinal appeared to applaud this resolution, very certain that it would not be durable.

While poets had celebrated, with much industry and emulation, the triumph of our armies, already French literature arose from obscurity—works of science and merit began to be produced; we possessed the poems of Malherbe; Racan, his pupil, and some others had entered with honor into the road that had been opened. The theatre alone preserved its ancient barbarism; it still presented only a *spectacle*, bereaved of taste and of interest; occasionally interspersed with pieces very perplexed, without imagination, and without probability, always weak, unnatural, and grossly ridiculous, both in style and plan; nevertheless these pieces were applauded, and the *spectacle* was universally liked.

Many *fêtes* were given at the court and at the city; every person of letters

profited by this moment of enthusiasm to offer to the public new productions of every kind.

A young poet, then a particular protegé of the cardinal, hastened to give the French theatre a tragedy that he was just about finishing. Though this poet has since said,

"Our own value who knows better than ourselves?"

he was far from foreseeing that this tragedy would form the most memorable epoch of French literature, and be the the commencement of that brilliant age of the arts to which Louis XIV. was to affix his name! The most happy presentiments of authorship could not have given to this poet the idea of the splendour of his success, and of the height to which he would be elevated. He was Pierre Corneille, and it was the Cid that was about to be performed.

The queen announced that she should attend the first representation of this tragedy, and Louis knowing that she

would take Mademoiselle de la Fayette, declared that he would accompany her; besides, he was sure that he should be doubly applauded by appearing in public, and being seen with the queen, who was universally beloved.

The presence of the king and queen being announced, drew an immense world to the first representation of the Cid. The king received with emotion the unanimous applause of the multitude. Mademoiselle de la Fayette witnessed it, seated in the back part of the box, behind the lady of honor of the queen. She was situated so as to be seen by the king without his being obliged to turn to look at her.

At last the curtain was raised, and the first scene of the Cid commenced. The first exposition excited an interest never before evinced; a profound silence expressed an attention which nothing could distract, and which strengthened from scene to scene. Surprize and admiration rendered the spectators a long time im-

moveable—each thought to hear for the first time heroes and lovers speak; language so exalted, sentiments so noble, and so pathetic of glory and of love, penetrated every soul, and elevated every mind! It was not a theatrical representation—it was not a fiction; it was a sublime revelation of all the human heart could feel of the most touching, of all that it could breathe of the most heroic! All listenened with avidity, every one wept, every one scarcely breathed, but no one dared to applaud; they feared to interrupt—they wished to lose nothing, not even a single word!

At last enthusiasm became manifest; a long time condensed, it burst forth with the most impetuous energy. In the midst of redoubled plaudits, cries were a thousand times repeated which called for the author; and at length Corneille was discovered in a small box. Some friends who had purposely surrounded him, now shewed him to the public when joy was at its height. By a transport which

seized at once every mind, by one universal exclamation he was proclaimed the greatest of all tragic poets, and posterity preserved for him this brilliant title, which he received in the infancy of that art of which he was the creator.

In rendering homage to this wonderful genius, ought we not also to admire the sensible and enlightened nation which knew so well to appreciate this first *chef-d'œuvre*?

Having then seen represented only the most miserable productions, it had preserved nevertheless an innate sentiment so just of the beautiful and the natural, that without reflection, without gradation, it was judged at once, in the short space of this memorable evening, with a taste as delicate and as correct as that of the most shining men of the successive age.

Throughout Paris, for the next day, only the Cid was conversed of—the remembrance of every other interest was effaced; ambition even forgot its hopes,

suspended its projects, occupied solely by this immortal piece.

The strength of genius never shewed itself in a more shining manner, and what impression did it not produce on the heart of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, and even upon that of Louis himself?

During the whole course of the piece, involuntary looks a thousand times passed between them. Mademoiselle de la Fayette sought a heart which comprised, like hers, the sentiments of Chimène, and her eyes in tears rested on the king. She enjoyed his being so moved; the emotion so lively that he evinced, was to her a certain proof of the sensibility and elevation of his soul, while the admiration that she saw in him added an inexpressible charm to that which she herself experienced.

Louis, notwithstanding the excessive rapture that the tragedy of the Cid had given him, was in a few days overwhelmed by public affairs. It is true, that the cardinal was careful to present them to him

in so intricate a state, and so perplexed, that even a man, the most capable of application, would have been terrified at their appearance.

When slothful minds burst all at once from their indolence, it is to fall at last into more apathy than ever: the effort which has drawn them from their habitual state has cost them so much, that they no longer breathe but in that kind of numbness they call repose; although overwhelming lassitude is worse than actual fatigue. Mademoiselle de la Fayette, always well treated by the queen, passed every evening with this princess; she heard with pain many epigrams on the labours of the cabinet, to which the king at this moment surrendered himself, they had the appearance of insinuating, that this ardour would soon relax; they condemned with asperity the cardinal, upon many splendid favours accorded to some of the military after the late campaign, and above all censured the king who had signed them.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette dared not espouse the part of the king, because she feared to defend him with too much warmth; but she undertook to justify the cardinal. She even made his eulogium, she recalled to memory that it was he who had erected the French academy, and built La Sarbonne, that he had founded the Royal Printing House, that he had established the Garden of Plants, and that he was the benefactor of the great artists *, and of all their literati the most distinguished (2).

This language displeased many persons, was approved by some others, and at last carried faithfully to the cardinal himself by Chavigny; but the cardinal concluded that the motive of Mademoiselle de la Fayette was to obtain favour and credit.

People in place are in reality much more modest than we believe them to be, for they always suppose that the promises which we bestow upon them are inte-

* Among others Le Pousin, and Le Sueur, (2)

rested, and they never think that we can love them for themselves.

Flattery then is not as persuasive as we imagine her. She would be, perhaps, less corrupt if she were entirely abused, she would leave, at least, candour: but as she only half deceives in exalting pride, she gives a general defiance which is understood every where, and which blemishes even friendship.

As it had been predicted about the queen, Louis soon overcome by a labour, that had been rendered so painful to him, restored all his affairs of public interest into the hands of the cardinal, determined to trouble himself with them no longer, except for form sake.

The same day, the Count de la Meilleraye, the relation of the cardinal, made a declaration of his passion for Mademoiselle de la Fayette, and of his wishes to obtain her hand; the cardinal approved it, and commissioned Chavigni to inform Mademoiselle de la Fayette of it. Not doubting a favourable reply, the car-

dinal spoke of it to the king, Louis was moved, and his agitation did not escape the penetrating survey of Richelieu, after a moment's silence the king said—

"Does Mademoiselle de la Fayette wish this alliance?"

"Sire, we are yet in ignorance of her sentiments; but I suppose, that if she has no other engagement she will not reject a proposal, which in every point of view, appears so advantageous."

"I must know her reply; you must acquaint me with it."

These words, dryly pronounced, served to confirm the suspicions of Richelieu; he did not urge the subject, but spoke on other matter.

The cardinal waited impatiently the report that Chavigni was to make him, and when the latter came he told him, that Mademoiselle de la Fayette, with as much firmness as politeness, had, without hesitation, refused this brilliant alliance; the cardinal instead of evincing discontent, smiled.

"This at least," said he, "has served to shew me, with certainty, an intrigue already formed: the king is in love with Mademoiselle de la Fayette, and they are of one mind. It was said six months before the last campaign, that the king had a *penchant* for her, but since it has not been spoken of. It is a mutual inclination; I now tell you, and this profound mystery proves, that the king attaches much more importance to this intrigue, than that he has already had with Mademoiselle de Hautefort. Your eminence imagines then that they have secret interviews?"

"No;" replied the cardinal laughing, "that would be too energetic for the king, it will require time to bring him to that, but I do imagine that they correspond.

"Every one boasts the wisdom of Mademoiselle de la Fayette.

"But they speak much more of her spirit; if, therefore, there is no exaggeration in the account, she is ambitious; it is absolutely necessary, that I should

have a particular interview with her; I think she herself desires it. The eulogiums that she bestows, without ceasing, upon your eminence evince it."

"Yes; now I penetrate the motive, she fears that she cannot secure the king, if I oppose obstacles to her wishes. This is palpable in effect; she has shewn me a sincere devotion, far from injuring, I will assist her. The difficulty is to find some means of speaking to her without noise, without its being known."

"The Count de Soissons gives a masqued ball in a few days, that will be a favourable opportunity."

"No; she will be masqued; in these kind of interviews it is advisable to observe every turn and play of countenance, more particularly with a young person who has been only eight months at court; besides, the king will certainly be present at this ball, and will be constantly at her side, but I will not delay doing it immediately afterwards; I will seize some adventitious moment to produce a meeting

with Mademoiselle de la Fayette, this may be effected at the Duchess d'Aiguillon's *, Mademoiselle de la Fayette has too much ambition not to be fully alive to the advantages of such a meeting; she will neither disdain nor reject offers such as I can make her.

Great geniuses judge in this manner, when they have delivered themselves up to the torment of public affairs, and are governed by ambition; they have little idea of real grandeur of soul, or of that direct integrity which attaches to the perfection of rectitude In general this manner of passing judgment upon mankind is tolerably just, but not to admit exceptions would be to disown that which sheds most honour on human nature, it would be to calumniate those few more precious beings, who exist in all classes of society. To discover artifice and insincerity there requires only common penetration, but to discover superior

* A Niece of the Cardinal.

virtue, to be able to read the movements of a delicate and generous heart, to trace its sentiments as we can those of our own features in a mirror, requires that we should have our own minds illumined by a celestial light, and this light so pure can alone give a character truly divine, as derived from a beneficent and all-powerful protector!

The cardinal was expeditious in giving an account to the king, of Mademoiselle de la Fayette's reply. He observed the countenance of Louis brighten, and the joy and delight which animated his eyes, but he pretended to remark nothing, and quitted the king, pleased with having discovered a secret from which he promised himself to derive much advantage.

Louis the next morning with impatient eagerness paid a visit to the queen, afterwards intending to have a long conversation with Mademoiselle de la Fayette, but his chagrin was extreme upon learning that she had suddenly set out for Paris, as her friend the Mar-

chioness de Beaumont was dangerously ill.

Louis was anxious that at least Mademoiselle de la Fayette herself should be sensible he felt for her inquietude, he sent twice every day a page to enquire after the health of Madame de Beaumont.

Much was said of these messages, which evinced the highest favour, and the motive was easily divined.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette was deeply affected, her friend was pronounced out of danger at the expiration of eight days: when the Duchess d'Aiguillon paid a visit to the Marchioness, she found with her Mademoiselle de la Fayette, with whom she appeared solely occupied, and she invited her to breakfast with her on the following day. When the duchess had retired, Madame de Beaumont with an expressive smile, looked at Mademoiselle de la Fayette, as she said—

"What do you think of all the pretty speeches that have just been made you? It is surely singular!"

"Not at all, it is only the cardinal who speaks through the duchess."

"The cardinal! and why?"

"To gain you over because you are believed to be in favour. If you wish wealth and honour for your friends, unite yourself to the cardinal, be guided by his counsels, and acquaint him with all the king may inform you of.—Betray friendship for lucre, and behold your fortune made!"

"I can comprehend why the cardinal may desire that all persons who approach the king should conduct themselves in this manner; but how can he have confidence to propose it with a noble frankness, simply saying, *Be devoted to me and you shall have pensions and credit, otherwise I will ruin you!*

"Is not this eloquence? there is surely magic in such words, they will delight, persuade, and be effective!

"I am a very insignificant being in the state, and the cardinal is all-powerful, yet I doubt his venturing to speak similarly to me."

"Perhaps his language might be a little more softened to you, but the substance of the discourse would still be the same—promises and menaces."

"It is possible any one can flatter himself with the power to at once evince contempt, and yet seduce."

"Ah! my God! politicians despise all men, and most of all incorruptible people, who are in their eyes either hypocrites or dupes."

Mademoiselle de la Fayette accepted the invitation of the Duchess d'Aiguillon merely from politeness and propriety, she distrusted her, and her déportment was cold, distant, and haughty.

The duchess had that coaxing, cajoling art which seduces and deceives only those who are noviciates in the world, but which succeeds always in women of a certain age, of elevated rank, and of good family.

They are acknowledged, with reason, never to be impertinent nor disdainful, their fondling reception, though general,

always flatters a little. It is a false semblance of amiability which no one mistakes, and which leaves an impression on every mind of its artifice and deception, but yet the world will accord it praise because each individual would wish to be able to persuade others that she is sincere in her turn.

The duchess had acquired a distinguished reputation as the enlightened protectress of the fine arts and of literature, and those who were the friends of letters could not consent to lower her in general estimation.

It is true that she was the supporter of some Thesis of love, in the form observed then at Sorbonne, for sustaining theological positions.

But ridicule attached much less to her than to the cardinal, who by inventing those profane amusements forgot his situation, and recalled it to others more than he wished.

For the rest, these dissertations established at court that taste for the plea-

sures of the mind which had shone so bright under the reign of Louis XIV.; finally, the house of the duchess was the cradle of the French academy; Corneille and Rotrou received therein the most noble encouragements, and the plan of the Cid and of Venceslas was formed in it.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette was received with open arms by the duchess, whom she found alone. During breakfast, to ingratiate herself, she set to work all that flattery could lavish of the seducing caresses, eulogiums on her beauty, her intellect, her beauty, predictions of the brilliant future which awaited her. At last she turned the conversation upon the cardinal, and taking a tone less serious, she said, smiling, that she was not unacquainted with her having been, upon more than one occasion, his defender; then affecting an air of confidence, added, that she must confess the cardinal was an implacable enemy, but that he was

also a friend the most ardent and the most generous.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette listened in silence to this preamble, when the door opened and the cardinal himself appeared.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette rose, and shewed an inclination very discreetly to quit the room; the duchess and the cardinal detained her. They were again seated, and conversed on indifferent subjects. At the end of a quarter of an hour a valet de chambre spoke very low to the duchess, who asked permission for absence, to have a few minutes conversation with a person upon business in her closet. "Besides," she added, addressing Mademoiselle de la Fayette, "I know that Monsieur le Cardinal will be happy to speak with you freely of this poor Count de la Meilleraye, whom you have so cruelly deprived of every hope; therefore I quit you without reluctance for a few minutes."

Having said this, she rose, tenderly

embraced Mademoiselle de la Fayette, and retired.

When the cardinal was alone with Mademoiselle de la Fayette, he said to her—

"I have some thanks and some reproaches to offer you: I know, mademoiselle, with what kindness you spoke of me, and above all, it would have been a source of great gratification to me to have beheld you enter into my family, but the links of friendship are sometimes stronger than those of relationship—I wish to be your friend."

Here Mademoiselle de la Fayette bowed with a respectful air, but said nothing in reply.

Courtiers and politicians are excellent physiognomists, they seldom believe what is said to them, they devote themselves to penetrate that which is wished to be concealed from them; they make a peculiar study of the changes of countenance, a look, a gesture, a manner of listening,

informs them often of more than indiscretion or ingenuousness could do.

The cardinal saw upon the countenance of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, a carelessnes, a calm, a dignity which produced in him the deepest astonishment! This phrase, *I wish to be your friend*, these solemn words, from the lips of Richelieu, had effected no change on her countenance!

Her imposing deportment gave to the view of the cardinal more of importance to the conquest he wished to achieve, he had warmly desired it, but now he attached to it a high price; to be frustrated would be at once a misfortune and a shame. What! the real sovereign of France, the most fertile negociator, and the greatest politician of Europe, could not gain over a young person of twenty-three years, without experience, and assured of his devotedness! This doubt was not supportable; he must then set into action every means of seduction, and employ every art to succeed.

"And you mademoiselle," returned the cardinal, after some moments of silence, "do you wish to be my friend? you have no longer a father in existence, will you accept me in that place? will you allow me to offer the counsels of experience, to guide you in a country which cannot be known to you, and of which the roads are so difficult and dangerous it is impossible to wander without being irretrievably lost?"

"Yes, sir, I can believe it when we engage in dark and bye ways, but there is nothing to fear when in open day, the great road is pursued with perseverance."

These words, pronounced with a firm voice and the most independant pride, so much confounded the cardinal that he remained speechless, his eyes fixed on Mademoiselle de la Fayette.—Anger and resentment began to mingle with surprise; however, this elevation of mind, this disdain of his protection and of his friendship, appeared to him so unnatural, that he imagined she was desirous he

should tender her more positive and solid offers. This idea reanimated him a little. "Speak freely," said he, smiling, "I know all."

"And what, my lord?"

"The king loves you; the purity of his heart and of his principles admits of your consent; his interest, youi own, I will say more, that of the state requires that we should be united."

"What kind of union does your eminence propose to me?".

"An entire confidence on your side, an *active* gratitude on mine."

The cardinal had the intention of promising some titles, some estates, some pensions, but Mademoiselle de la Fayette, who had with down-cast eyes listened coldly, suddenly raised her view, and regarded him stedfastly. This look silenced him; he felt that he must assume an adroit manner, with which to venture to make this awe-inspiring female offers that he had lavished upon others with so much success, and without any circumlocution.

While he sought to compose an artificial discourse, Mademoiselle de la Fayette spoke.

"Your eminence," said she, "doubtless, only asks of me personal confidence, that alone which I can confer with honor, but I have no secrets, my heart is without ambition, and my life without mystery; besides the lofty mind of your eminence will, without difficulty, believe me when I add, that if ever the king deigns to honor me with his confidence, it will not be betrayed by the influence of seduction or of power."

At these words the cardinal coloured, but dissembling his mental anger, he answered:

"The most truly worthy return to the confidence of the king is the ability to give him useful counsel, and I would propose to you, mademoiselle, to render you capable of that, because the mind in this case cannot supply those lights which you require."

"But, I believe, my lord, that integrity will suffice."

"You have little of the manner of the court; and perhaps you will learn, at some future day, that proofs of my esteem are not to be disdained."

"No one attaches a higher price than myself to the esteem of your eminence; I do not think you have given me any proof of it in this interview, but I am sure of having deserved it."

"I have only one word more to say to you," replied the cardinal, quite beside himself; "it is, that favor here is a mere illusion without my support."

"I cannot believe that, my lord, which degrades my sovereign and yourself."

"Think of what I have effected, and what I am—think of the future; compare the fate of my enemies with the situation of my friends, and then choose."

"I think upon my duty; with this single thought, it is possible to be neither seduced by promises nor intimidated by menaces."

At these words the cardinal became furious; he rose as he said, with a bitter smile, "You are young and I ex-

cuse, therefore, more readily that presumption which enwraps you; for I am sure you will be cured of it." Saying this, he hastily and abruptly quitted her.

And it was thus that rectitude and integrity disconcerted the combinations of experience and the artifices of a man, the most consummate adept in negociations and in public affairs.

The cardinal had retired with an inextinguishable resolution to ruin her who dared to resist and brave his authority with so much *sang froid* and firmness; her, who had been able to embarrass and confound him.

The customs of public life and of commerce with the world, do not allow, after a long conversation, that a positive refusal can be mistaken for a dissembled resistance. Loftiness of soul may, perhaps, be attributed to presumption; but it has a character so decisive, that it is impossible to confound it with artifice. The cardinal well convinced that he could never seduce Mademoiselle de la

Fayette, thought now only of the means to distance her for ever from the court.

The Count de Soissons, who wished only to give a ball for Mademoiselle de la Fayette, postponed it upon the illness of Madame de Beaumont which would have prevented her appearance; under a frivolous pretence, he ventured to delay the orders of the king and queen, who had promised to honour the *fête* with their presence. The king, from the same sentiment that the Count de Soissons felt, was delighted at finding the day postponed. The cardinal acquainted with all these circumstances and some others, thought to profit by them before the return of Mademoiselle de la Fayette.

He told the king, that he had met Mademoiselle de la Fayette accidentally at the Duchess d' Aiguillon's, that he asked why she rejected the professions of the Count de la Meilleraye, and that a question so simple had caused much embarrassment.

At this intelligence the king was in reality himself embarrassed; he had a dis-

contented and severe air; because he believed that the intention was to allude to his own commitment with Mademoiselle de la Fayette.

The cardinal pretended not to remark his ingratitude, but said—

"I have discovered since, secrets that were endeavoured to be concealed from me: the Count de Soissons is lost in love with Mademoiselle de la Fayette, and from appearances, it is obvious he is not hated by her."

"How!"

"It is for her he gives a *fête*; it is for her that he delays it; it is for her that he is desirous of breaking with Madame de Montbazon."

"These circumstances evince his love, but not that this love is mutual. She has the reputation of being too discreet to give any hope to a man whom she cannot marry."

"This would not be the first example of a secret marriage of this kind, she is so lovely and so ambitious those say who are acquainted with her."

"Ambitious! and who says that?"

"The Duchess de Chevreuse, Chavigny, the Marchioness de Beaumont. But her understanding with the Count de Soissons, what proofs are there of it? I wish to know them—be explicit."

"Sire, I have no interest to make a mystery of what is generally said upon this intrigue."

"Speak then."

"Saint Ibal, attached to the Count de Soissons, is for ever with her. It is not certainly upon his own account; he would not tread thus openly upon the steps of his master. Of all men of the court, Saint Ibal is the one whom Mademoiselle de la Fayette treats the best—indeed they even regularly write."

"They write!"

"And it is known that Saint Ibal is only the bearer of those letters which are addressed to him."

"Who has told you this?"

"A rejected desperate lover, the Count de la Meilleraye."

"Enough, I will have more informa-

tion—and if your report be found correct, I will not permit such a person to remain about the queen."

"Sire, it is not a report, it is a simple conversation that the curiosity of your majesty has lengthened; I speak only from public rumour, and from the complaints of a desolate lover."

"Jealousy is in general quick-sighted, but still it is possible that it may be deceived sometimes; thus I answer for nothing."

The king hastily closed this interview; he dismissed the cardinal, and desired Boisenval to be called.

He was a man of subaltern degree, very intriguing, of extreme activity, and long possessed of the royal confidence in every thing the king wished to effect unknown to the cardinal and his favou rites in power. Every one knew that the favourites hated him. The cardinal exhibited much of disdain towards him, and the favour of Boisenval was only the more secured.

On the other side, Boisenval, in his secret interviews with Louis, displayed the greatest animosity against Richelieu, but he spoke it only of his private character and his heart. He never attacked the man of the state; on the contrary, he even acknowledged, with an air of pique and of vexation, that he held *Europe in his hand;* he praised him to excess with infinite art and in common language mingled abuse which signified nothing: these eulogiums were not suspected, or at least appeared to be so, and the king had the good-nature to see only detraction in this discourse. The art of lacerating and of blackening, while appearing to praise is much in use at court, but it deceives there less than elsewhere; but the reversed art of praising in avowing a contrary intention, is there much less necessary and less common; it requires lively manners, blunt, and often rough or rude ones, and at the same time a fine acute spirit which renders its execution very difficult.

Boisenval possessed it perfectly, he had received some lessons from a great master, and this master was Richelieu, to whom he was entirely sold; and without any person in the least suspecting it *.

Louis charged Boisenval to watch Mademoiselle de la Fayette and Saint Ibal, and endeavour to discover if it were true that they held a correspondence in writing. Boisenval, by the order of Richelieu, had already been very active on this occasion, and he had contrived to intercept a letter of Saint Ibal, addressed to Mademoiselle de la Fayette, and which he gave to Richelieu; the latter opened the letter, and found its contents as follow:

"Is it agreed, mademoiselle, that I am a troublesome third person, that last night I arrived too soon, and that you have found me very importunate? Your sentiments for the person who loves you

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* Historical.

with so much passion, will not allow you to dissemble what you think. You have both received me as two lovers would welcome an old very suspicious tutor who came to interrupt a passionate interview. This is quite natural, and I do not complain of it; I simply promise you to be more discreet in future. I take the liberty of writing to you, mademoiselle, only to tell you that I have executed your orders; your commission is performed, and with all the zeal that you have a right to expect from my respect and dévotedness.

"SAINT IBAL."

The cardinal, after having read this letter, did not doubt of the perfect understanding between Mademoiselle de la Fayette and the Count de Soissons; certain of having in his possession what would ruin this haughty woman, he had spoken to the king, as has been already related.

When Boisenval had given him an

account of the commission with which the king had entrusted him, he told him to let some days pass; and immediately Boisenval, by his order, begged the king to procure some writing of Saint Ibal and of Mademoiselle de la Fayette. "For if I happen," said he, "to seize any of their letters, your majesty must be fully convinced that they are indeed in their hand-writing; since if no doubts can remain of the intrigue, Mademoiselle de la Fayette must be conceived the perfection of hypocrisy and deceit, of which I believe that the cardinal is alone capable."

"You are a good man, Boisenval," said the king; "you have no idea of the arts of which women capable."

"That is true, sire; but I can well see through all the stratagems of his eminence. The study in which I have so long been engaged ought to have initiated my mind. For example:—I observe that he has penetrated the sentiments of your majesty for Mademoiselle de la Fayette, that he is in consequence jealous,

and that he would be delighted at her disgrace."

"Yes, I am aware of it; he has always thwarted my affections."

"They say he has great talents; deeds the most diabolical cost him nothing, for he has a heart of rock; and I should not be astonished if he had calumniated this poor Mademoiselle de la Fayette."

"Ah! would to Heaven!....Since the day that I spoke to you, nothing has been discovered?"

"No, sire—at least, not with certainty; and it is with certainty only that I would wish to speak."

"You have been told something——?"

"Mere idle rumour. Some say.... And yet who knows if it may not be only the cardinal himself who spreads these tales?"

"But what tales?"

"We are assured that the Marchioness de Beaumont has not been ill; that it was a feigned malady to favor certain assignations.—'Madame de Beaumont!

could she be capable of playing so vile a part?' was my reply. But she is without fortune—she is in debt. Monsieur le Comte de Soissons is munificent and generous!"

"This is too scandalous; I cannot believe it."

"Neither can I. Others assert that Madame de Beaumont is not in the confidence of the parties, that her illness has only served as a convenient pretence for Mademoiselle de la Fayette to lengthen her stay at Paris, and that Mademoiselle de la Fayette had merely received the prince in her own house."

"The family mansion of the Countess de Brégi, which she has inherited?"

"Yes, sire."

"But she ought to sell this house, as she has another so much better at Vincennes."

"She wished to sell that at Paris; the agreement was almost formed, and then suddenly broken off."

"That is singular indeed! You are sure of it?"

"Oh! yes, sire; and behold another fact. She passes nearly every evening in this house; she remains there at least two hours: no one is during that time allowed to enter, except a single individual, a man wrapped up in a great cloak! At the expiration of two hours, this man departs; a moment after, Mademoiselle de la Fayette returns to her friend, and passes the remainder of the evening with her, and then retires to her chamber in her house. This is what has been her custom for the last five days."

"Boisenval, are you certain of this?"

"Sire, I have seen it myself yesterday and the day before; but yet it is possible that this individual may not be the Count de Soissons."

"Go again this evening; conceal yourself opposite to her house, and come at three o'clock to-morrow to speak to me."

This conversation plunged the king into the most grievous anxiety: all that

the cardinal had said to him he had suspected; but the communication of Boisenval was so *naif*, it displayed so much of good-nature, that it took effect, and made much impression in his naturally distrustful disposition. He shut himself up; he could not sleep—he delivered himself over to ideas the most melancholy, and in this state awaited the return of Boisenval.

The next day, at the appointed hour, Boisenval arrived.

"Well?" cried the king, the moment he appeared.

"Sire," said Boisenval, "I yesterday, in the evening, witnessed exactly the same as before. Mademoiselle de la Fayette entered her house at the decline of day, and a quarter of an hour after, a man on foot, enveloped in a great cloak, slipped in mysteriously after her. But," he continued, "I bring a more positive proof; it is a letter of Saint Ibal, which I have contrived to intercept."

"Addressed to Mademoiselle de la Fayette?"

"Yes, sire; I am ignorant of its contents:—behold it."

"I know the writing of Saint Ibal; give it to me."

At these words, Louis took the letter, very adroitly re-sealed; he opened it trembling, and after having read it with shuddering emotion, he exclaimed, "Perfidious woman! with a figure so celestial! an air so noble, and full of candour! Ah! what deceit!—Listen, Boisenval; hear this sentence.—'*Your sentiments for the person who loves you with so much passion!*' And again:—'*You have both received me as two lovers would welcome an old tutor, very suspicious, who came suddenly to interrupt a passionate interview!*' Can there now remain a doubt?"

"Ah! indeed it is not Saint Ibal who is her lover; it is now proved that he is not the confidant of these clandestine loves, and that the man in the cloak is certainly the prince."

"Shameless girl, and truly perverse! after the confidence that I have shown her, to deceive me thus!"

"But, sire, we know that the sentiments of your majesty had never passed the bounds of friendship the most chaste and correct."

"And can I accord such a sentiment to a woman capable of forming and cementing a criminal intrigue?"

"Your majesty is unacquainted with love; it will lure into errors."

"Ah! I am indeed unhappy! Yes, I would be even in my grave. All I loved is torn from me! Death has deprived me of the Constable of Luynes; I have been compelled to separate from my mother; Mademoiselle de Hautefort betrayed my secrets—at least I would estimate her manners; but the last....I have admired nothing as I have done her, and now I must despise her! Tell me, Boisenval, are they privately married? I cannot believe that a person so modest and so

pious should have a lover under other circumstances. Are they married?"

"Yes, sire, they have completed a marriage of conscience; they both love to desperation."

"What insolence! A prince of the blood presume to dispose of his faith—of his hand, without my permission! This marriage is void."

"Yes, but it assures to them the happiness of living without compunction. The cardinal knows it, I am convinced."

"That is very possible, for he knows every thing."

"They have, perhaps, had his tacit consent; they think that quite sufficient. I am accounted as nothing! No, no, I have not yet quite descended from my throne; I will remount it with *éclât*, if only for a single day, to punish them, and then I will complete my melancholy destiny—I will purchase death by grief and tears!"

In speaking thus, this unhappy prince shed a torrent of tears.

"Live, sire," replied Boisenval; "live for the happiness of France, and of those faithful subjects who are devoted to you."

"No," cried the king; "nothing can longer attach me to life. Ruled by an insolent minister, who is useful to France, and too just myself to deprive the state of a necessary support—too proud to bow without suffering, under his authority—what to me is this high rank, this vain title? Without power, without honor, which imposes upon me mortal constraints and duties I cannot fulfil, I derive from the past only regrets, the present brings only distracting pangs, and I behold in the future only *ennui* and the greatest discouragement. Friendship alone had power to re-animate this sunken heart. I have loved nothing as I did her, and with what respect! I never have dared to write to her a note, a single line. Boisenval, I must confess it, I can now, I do despise her—I hate her! But I was myself astonished at the sentiment that she inspired in me, a sentiment too ar-

dent perhaps. Heaven has punished me for it. I must no longer think of her:— I will, at least, show that I am her master. Boisenval, I will go this evening with you to Paris; there you shall know my design."

"What, sire?"

"Yes, I wish to surprize, to confound them, and to pronounce myself, upon them, the verdict of their separation, and of their exile.

Boisenval, in giving an account of the result of his discoveries as a spy, had invented nothing; it was very true that he had seen, three successive evenings, a man mysteriously enter the house of Mademoiselle de la Fayette; but he feared, that if any obstacle should interrupt the assignation, that the king would doubt his veracity. Thus he combated with sincerity the resolution of the king, but it was without effect. Louis, altered from his general character by love and the deepest resentment, was not to be appeased; but one hour after, and he learned

that Mademoiselle de la Fayette was on her return to Saint Germain.

The king was in despair, for he burned with a desire of revenge: he delayed the execution of his project to the first journey that mademoiselle should take to Paris; he resolved till then to dissemble.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette, happy in having left her friend in good health, returned with the sweet and soothing idea that she should find the king more tender than ever. No inquietude checked her joy—sensible and generous hearts are always confiding; she feared neither the resentment of the cardinal, nor that an absence of three weeks had been able to alter him who so deeply interested her. The king loved her—what had she to dread from intrigues of the court, and the power of Richelieu? She believed herself certain of seeing the king the following day, and yet at the morning and the evening circle of the queen, he was alike invisible, and also on the subsequent day.

Without engendering any suspicion, Mademoiselle de la Fayette was afflicted; she imagined that Louis suffered as much as herself, but that he must have some reason for not coming that she could not divine.

On his side, the king, a thousand times more agitated, could not resist, at the end of two days, a violent desire to brave that which overturned his reason, and which destroyed his repose.

While delaying, he mentally said, "To confound and punish her, I wish, at least, to humiliate her publicly."

At length Louis, one morning, came to the apartment of the queen. Mademoiselle de la Fayette was not yet in that of the maids of honor; she arrived a minute after the king had crossed it, and she waited with extreme emotion for the time when he would quit the chamber of the queen. With eyes fixed on the door, she expected each moment to see it open.

At last the king appeared. Certain that his first glance would be to seek her,

she lifted up towards him her softened gaze, and shuddered at seeing his alarming paleness, his unsteady carriage, and his dejected air.

"Alas!" she mentally said, "he has been ill, and he has made a secret of it to conceal it from me. Oh! that he knew me better."

The king slowly advanced; he saw mademoiselle without appearing to survey her. He stopped near Mademoiselle du Fargis, one of the maids of honor; he spoke to her with mingled distraction and affability. During this time, he rested his hand on the back of a chair, for he could not support himself, and it was obvious his limbs trembled.

At last, still more overcome, he passed before Mademoiselle de la Fayette, whom the shock of agitation had rendered immoveable; he turned his head on one side, he cast upon her a sorrowful look, and wished to pursue his way out of the room; but it required a strong effort to do this. Arrived near the door, he found

himself ill, he seized hold of the key for support, his head fell on his shoulder, his eyes closed, his knees were seen to bend under him.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette darted forward, she sustained him; Louis opened languidly his humid eyes, and he shuddered in finding himself in her arms.

He repulsed her, saying in a low voice, "*Leave me—it is you who kill me!*"

Mademoiselle de la Fayette dismayed, threw herself into a chair, called her companions and disappeared.

Trembling, beside herself, she remained in the anti-chamber, her ear rivetted on the door, she heard that the king was revived, that he spoke, that he prevented the queen being called; that he rose, that he walked, and that he was about to turn the lock—then, with the promptitude of lightning, she fled, and without daring to cast a look behind her.

When she was in her own chamber she gave a free indulgence to tears. "Great God!" she exclaimed, "what has

then happened? he has repulsed me, he has told me, *it is you who kill me!* incomprehensible words which resound yet upon my ear. It is I who kill him! what have I done? what does he believe? Ah! how wan he was—I thought he would have died! He was in this state for me, he loves me then; and a thousand times more than I could have imagined! and yet he complains, he is violently irritated—It may then be my long residence in Paris; having known that the Marchioness de Beaumont was out of danger more than eight days since, he thought that should have sooner returned me; he is not aware that the marchioness alone and suffering had great need of me in the first moments of her convalescence, and that she required of me the sacrifice which has cost me so much! But how can I speak to him, how explain to him my reasons. In this perplexity, Mademoiselle de la Fayette resolved to write to the king without knowing how to make her letters reach him. She wrote for the remainder

of the morning, she recommenced twenty times this letter, finding it alternately either too tender, or too dry, not being able to limit her expressions when she listened to her heart, or having nothing to say when she consulted reason ; at last she decided upon giving to the king a sincere explanation, and detailed the cause of her residence in Paris with a respectful and touching sentence upon the grief she had felt at having displeased him. She folded this letter in the form of a petition, determined to give it herself to the king if he came in the evening to the queen's apartment.

How very long the day appeared, but in the evening she had the delight and joy of beholding the king appear. He looked not towards her, he did not approach her, but he spoke to no other. At the end of half an hour he made a movement to depart, Mademoiselle de la Fayette advanced towards him, took off her glove and presented to him her letter as a petition.

She performed this action with confidence and a striking dignity, and from that very reason which would have intimidated others. The world regarded her as a disgraced personage, and she wished at least to prove that she preserved that proper pride which arises from an irreproachable conscience. Louis was visibly agitated, but he received the paper and immediately retired.

The events of this day, the anger of the king, his grief, the open disgrace of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, furnished subject for all the conversation of Saint Germain; the cardinal, informed of all by Boisenval, triumphed! His friend spread the news that mademoiselle would be exiled the next day, and for ever.

The queen, who much interested herself, questioned her with kindness when they met in that intimate circle which she honored by the name of her society.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette replied that she was ignorant of the source of this storm, and that she had taken the

liberty of writing to the king, conjuring him to tell her what she had done to displease him.

"Right," said the Duchess of Chevreuse, the king will grow calm, we are not so melancholy when we are implacable: the courtiers thought as the duchess. The dejection of the king struck them much more than his anger, although even they did not suspect so ardent a sentiment. Thus Mademoiselle de la Fayette could not fail to perceive, that however disgraced, judging from the manner with which she was treated, an accommodation was not impossible.

Nothing gives us confidence in such a situation so much as a good reception from some of the courtiers, and nothing renders us so sensible of fear, so alive to the dread of disgrace as appearance of the reverse among that description of persons. Mademoiselle was much less agitated than others. When we have written a long letter of explanation to him whom we love, we think that we are

justified, and Mademoiselle de la Fayette had expected to see Louis thus impressed in the evening; he however then appeared much more dejected than irritated, but this illusion was soon to vanish.

Upon retiring to her apartment at night, she received the reply of the king, the first letter that she had ever received from him, she opened it precipitately, she found within it these alarming words :

" You affect ignorance of the reason of my just resentment, and attribute it to causes the most frivolous. I could not be offended by such trifles—your justification is impossible! Write to me no more. I will not receive your letters."

After concluding the perusal of this letter, Mademoiselle de la Fayette sank into a chair, and remained there petrified during more than half an hour! At last arousing from this kind of stupor, she once more read this fatal letter, each word of which pierced her very heart; sensibility soon extinguished resentment, and then again anger overcame her grief. " Behold then,"

she exclaimed, "the first lines that I have received from his hand! behold the reward of an attachment as pure as tender! He says, '*Write to me no more,*' no, he shall no more hear of me; I will spare him the pain of banishing me from this tumultuous court — To-morrow at the dawn of day I will set out. Those who have calumniated me have persuaded him that my '*justification is impossible.*' I know that an explanation in a quarter of an hour would suffice to dissuade him; yet I will not ask it—I disdain it. Unhappy prince! unfortunately the sport of intriguing minds! You accuse me, you disown me, you exile me; you may do so, but I can do more, I will be silent —and I abandon you. Alas! you are sensible it is you, it is you alone who would feel your own heart proscribed!

Saying this, her tears flowed with rapidity, but soon rallying her pride she effaced the tears from her cheeks, she called her woman, gave every order for her departure, and then retired to bed,

if not with tranquillity, at least with that kind of fortitude which is its substitute, and which inspires always in elevated minds a just sense of indignation. But sleep—how can a deeply-wounded spirit deliver itself up to that?—how banish those ruling thoughts, which in great afflictions remain immoveable in the imagination, and entirely occupy it in the depths of the profound silence of night? This thought, which was as a sharp steel plunged into her heart, seemed to twine around every sense, to lacerate them!—Mademoiselle de la Fayette repeated without ceasing, '*he has renounced me!*' In vain her heavy eyelids closed, if a happy forgetfulness for an instant allayed her sufferings, she was soon awakened with an agonizing convulsion, crying out, '*he has renounced me!*'

As soon as day appeared, an attendant entered her chamber; she arose, dressed herself in haste, and set out.

Arrived at Paris, she flew to the Marchioness de Beaumont, and gave her an account of all that had happened.

"Such," said she, "are the fruits of your conversation with the cardinal, this vindictive man has avenged himself by calumniating you, and certainly with infinite and artful dexterity."

"Ah!" replied Mademoiselle de la Fayette, "I pardon the King his suspicion and his credulity, he is full of candour, he has been a thousand times abused, and he who deceives him is consummate in art! but he *renounces me* without wishing to hear my defence, without even evincing the desire of confounding me; he has taken his measures —he is alienated from me; he says this in his letter, and it is this I cannot forgive! He is incapable of feeling love, his friendship is as weak as his love—it is thus that a faithless mistress might have been dismissed; but a friend! to whom an entire confidence had been pledged.

"I will go to Saint Germain," said the marchioness, "I will require an audience."

"He will refuse it, he no longer

wishes to hear of me; when such a resolution can be taken in so short a time, it is impossible to have loved !"

"Yet he fainted upon again seeing you"—

"And the next day banished me for ever!"

"Mademoiselle de Hautefort was exiled, but you are not yet."

And this letter, this cruel letter, is it not a hundred times more overwhelming than even a letter of exile? Is it not a positive order to distance myself eternally? No—he has done all this and I will never see him more! What chimeras I must renounce! I shall suffer long, I shall always regret it, but I shall take no step to endeavour to regain his favour; I will not return during life to the court, and if your friendship should find the means of convincing him of the error of his judgment, and making him acknowledge his own injustice, I will not avail myself of it: such is my irrevocable resolution."

Madame de Beaumont, although certain that her friend spoke with sincerity, yet also knew that we sometimes forgive, when we so deeply regret; but she judiciously appeared to enter into the sentiments of Mademoiselle de la Fayette; she would have combated them in vain in the first moments of anger and of grief.

While Mademoiselle de la Fayette thus poured forth her sorrows into the bosom of friendship; Louis, who had caused all her steps to be watched by Boisenval, learned that she had repaired to Paris, and that she had carried with her all her trunks, this made him conclude that she proposed a long residence in Paris.

The king had at the same time been informed that the Count de Soissons had also set out at midnight.

"And I also," said he, "I will depart this evening, they shall see me!"

In fact a little before dark he sat off secretly and *incog.* attended only by Boi-

senval, in a small vehicle, and repaired to Paris. He left his carriage at the entrance of its suburbs, followed only by Boisenval: he went into the street in which was the house of Mademoiselle de la Fayette; he was wrapped up in a great cloak, and he had upon his head a hat turned down which almost entirely concealed his face. The day closed—the king promenaded half a quarter of an hour in the street; at the end of that time he saw Mademoiselle de la Fayette arrive, and some minutes after the man in the brown cloak, who knocked gently at the door, and was at the next moment let into the house.

The king, absolutely furious, darted towards the house; he knocked violently —an old porter half opened one of the folding gates, Louis and Boisenval passed through; the porter was surprised and alarmed.

"I am the king," said Louis, "conduct me without noise to the apartment where your mistress is; you Boisenval follow me, to bring hither this man.

The porter tremblingly obeyed, he had recognized the king, who, in crossing the court-yard, ordered him to avoid the anti-chambers in which the domestics were; he was shown up a little private staircase and passed through a long gallery, at the end of it he entered a large apartment, when the porter shewed him a folding door which was its very extremity.

"There," said he, "is the gallery where my mistress is."

"It is enough," said the king, in a low voice, "return to your station: Boisenval follow him."

When the king was quite alone, he heard, with surprise, a confused noise, as formed by the voices of many children. He advanced gently towards the door of this room, in which Mademoiselle de la Fayette was enclosed, he knew that these voices must come from thence. Always wrapped up in his riding cloak, and his hat flapped over his eyes, he partially opened the door.

What a sight was there presented to his view! He beheld Mademoiselle de la Fayette seated at the side of the venerable Saint Vincent, and surrounded by twelve children who had been bequeathed to her by her aunt, and who repeated successively aloud the rudiments of Christianity!

What a sudden light did it throw upon the recent affair—what a justification! Louis would involuntarily have prostrated himself before her, but he was forced to constrain his wishes; he suddenly shut the door; he had seen Mademoiselle de la Fayette start; he thought that she had recognized him, he was not deceived.

He perceived on his left a boudoir open, he entered it; he found there a little table before a canopied couch, on which two lights were placed. He threw himself beneath this canopy, and a stream of tears bathed his cheeks! However Mademoiselle de la Fayette was not yet entirely justified; the letter of

Saint Ibal still testified against her, but what Louis had just seen had removed the film of prejudice from his eyes, had re-opened his heart to the sweetest confidence. This letter has but an equivocal sense, he began to think; I am sure it is so.—

As he said this to himself, he heard the voice of Mademoiselle de la Fayette who was taking leave of her respectable friend: in another moment she entered into the next room, and seeing the king, who had taken off his hat—

"Ah!" she exclaimed, "it is then no illusion—what, sire! do I indeed once more behold you?"

"First," said Louis, "I ought to confess to you all my crime. I have intercepted a letter which was addressed to you; read it, it is only an explanation of this that I ask, every thing else is already clear to me; in restoring you this note, it is only with the desire of making this avowal."

Mademoiselle de la Fayette took the

note, she smiled upon reading it, and said—

"Saint Ibal refers to the friendship of Madame de Beaumont for me; a sentiment which he styles a passion."

"Ah, without doubt," replied Louis, "a friendship, perhaps, sufficiently lively to merit that name."

"But what interpretation then did your Majesty give to this letter?"

"The Count de Soissons adores you, I was assured that you loved him."

"And you have believed it?"

Saying these words, Mademoiselle de la Fayette rose, walked some steps away, opened a press, and drew thence a little casket without a lock, and gave it to the king, saying—

"Sire, this casket contains six letters from the Count de Soissons, they are the only ones I have received, the last is dated the day before yesterday; I implore your Majesty to read it, you will see in it only the expressions of a very passionate and respectful attach-

ment wholly destitute of hope, to which I have not only never replied by writing, but even these letters have been received by stratagem, which did not admit the possibility of divining whence they came.

The king read the letter, and then could no longer restrain the most ardent sentiment and individual passion that he had ever felt throughout his life! he fell upon his knees before Mademoiselle de la Fayette, as she exclaimed, "Oh, how culpable am I!"

"Great God!" returned Mademoiselle de la Fayette, extending her hand to assist him to rise; "what are you doing?"

"I implore forgiveness—pardon—in seeing you I have forgotten all, even my own sufferings!"

"You are not fully acquainted with the extent of my injustice, I will conceal nothing from you, however painful the confession may be, it is only a weak expiation of a lamentable blindness."

"Ah! I was not forgotten; you have

condescended to come hither in search of me! can I after that maintain the slightest resentment?"

"While I was accusing and calumniating you, you were occupied with the tenderest and most pious cares. And I have passed some days without admiring you! Oh, that I could obliterate from my life those dreadful days which have left eternal remorse!"

Louis expressed himself with that ardour and sensibility which produced as much of emotion as astonishment and tenderness in Mademoiselle de la Fayette: she gently disengaged her hand which Louis had constantly retained within his.

"I implore your Majesty," she said, "to be quite assured that for the future I will never practise dissimulation for a moment with you. I am unacquainted with love, I believe friendship sufficient for my happiness; but if ever hereafter I could resolve to form an engagement, you shall know it before the object of this new sentiment himself."

This prudent discourse was not unintentional, it informed Louis that he had no right to be jealous of a legitimate attachment; it reassured a conscience which began secretly to take alarm.

Louis sighed, a cloud of grief overspread his countenance; "I understand you," said he, "you have formed the intention of marrying at some future day."

"No, sire, I have even for marriage an aversion that I believe invincible."

"Can it really be so?—Reflect that you could not marry without separating yourself from me, without severing the knot which unites us; this knot, formed in sincerest confidence, and which constitutes my sum of felicity!—What would then become of me without indemnification, without consolation, abandoned by the one being alone whom I could adore, and whose counsels are so essential to me?"

"Well then, sire," interrupted Mademoiselle de la Fayette, "I resign to you my future life, and that is to devote it to

virtue! It is a matter of indifference to me to know what may be the events of it; it is sufficient that I know it will appertain to you, and that you will dispose of it, certain of finding in you an enlightened guide, a judge as severe as my own conscience, and finally an august and revered master, who will, in truth, be to me the image of the Divinity on earth, whose orders and inspirations can only strengthen and establish me in the sacred paths of duty!"

"And I," exclaimed Louis, with enthusiasm; "I pledge you confidence without bounds, a friendship unequalled; I swear to follow your every counsel, your angelic soul will elevate and animate mine; he whom you wish for a guide and for a master, is desirous to reign that he may by glory ennoble the cherished titles which constitute his happiness."

At these words, Mademoiselle de la Fayette, transported with purest delight, replied only by tears, with which Louis

mingled his. He had never before felt similarly affected: it seemed to him that he received the supernatural gift of a new existence; he conceived himself suddenly transformed—he was indeed so at this moment.

It is thus that love, under a specious imposing form, entwines and deludes two virtuous hearts which he could never seduce, were he to shew himself in his real character.

It was necessary to separate, and also to maintain the most profound silence respecting this interview. Mademoiselle de la Fayette promised to return the next day to Saint Germain.

The king, upon quitting the house, gave fifty louis-d'ors to the porter, recommending him to be silent.

Boisenval knew every thing through the porter, and he recognized the pious Vincent in him whom he had so long in the dark taken for the Count de Soissons.

The porter had related that Mademoiselle de la Fayette had received under

her care twelve orphans consigned to her protection by the Countess de Brégi, on her death-bed. Thus he was not surprized at the enlivened air witnessed in the king, and he appeared to partake both his joy and his vivid admiration.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette, after the departure of the king, remained more than three hours in her little boudoir, yielding to the delightful gratification of recalling with exactness so sweet a conversation.

The king, believing her culpable, had still wished to hear her; notwithstanding his natural timidity, and his aversion for all extraordinary and uncommon actions, he had come *incog.* to seek her at Paris.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette traced in this single step the certain indications of a character replete with energy and the most acute sensibility; and the king had solemnly sworn to follow her advice, and live hereafter for glory.

Wrapt in the most seducing hopes, Mademoiselle de la Fayette remained

only a few hours in bed; she arose with the sun, and dressed herself with haste, impatient to seek her friend, and to talk all day of the king.

At the moment when she was sallying forth, Boisenval was announced, who, advancing respectfully, delivered a letter from the king (4). She opened it, and hastily read these lines.

"I wish to contribute to your good actions. How well I love these orphans whom I have seen assembled around you! I give to each of these children a pension for life of one thousand francs. It is gratifying to me to think that henceforth they will unite my remembrance with that of their benefactress!

"To partake all your sentiments, to see only through your eyes, to act only as you advise, to live only for you—such are my vows, my projects, and the sole destiny which can render me happy!"

This letter pictured at once much of love and the character of Louis. This

prince did love, and he renounced his own ideas and his own will to submit himself to those of the object of his affections; he asked only in return for chains. This was the language of a passionate lover; it was not that of a king. Mademoiselle de la Fayette saw in this letter only the touching expression of a most tender sentiment, and an engagement to follow the noblest counsels. She did not consider that he who could thus deliver himself up voluntarily, and without restriction, to dependence upon her, would never have resolution to throw off that upon a man the most artful and the most skilful. She replied immediately, and never was gratitude expressed with more energy and sensibility.

As soon as Boisenval had quitted her, she flew to the house of her friend, who partook her joy. Mademoiselle de la Fayette praised with as much warmth as sincerity, the spirit, the soul, and the sentiments of Louis.

"How very happy I am," said she,

"yet notwithstanding my present happiness, it is upon the future that my imagination reposes most delightfully, it is to that my heart attaches itself, and to that all my thoughts incline. I already see in perspective the king reign with *éclát*, with glory! I see him hereafter cherished, admired.—Ah! could it be possible he should not be loved by his subjects! when he will become accessible, when it will be he who distributes rewards and recompenses, when they experience his goodness, his generosity, they will adore him! My first care shall be to draw him towards the queen, I confess I shall not tranquilly enjoy his friendship until I see him towards the queen such as he ought to be."

"This re-union is a matter of importance, it will in itself be sufficient to render the king beloved: the people expect from their rulers the example of domestic virtues; besides, France has for a long time been desirous of an heir to the throne. She no longer expects it, but

if you could re-establish the conjugal connexion between the king and queen, what service you would render to the state! But nothing is more difficult; the queen is ill-advised, the king is irritated and hurt; the cardinal always mortally dreading the ascendancy that a wife may gain, carefully heightens the old resentments of the king, and by a thousand little informations, furnishes him each day with new subjects for discontent; the queen has not committed any imprudence, she has not allowed herself to ridicule or pass a light reflection on the character and the conduct of the king, which could be repeated to him.

"Unfortunate as amiable prince, every thing conspires against you!

"You will be his titular genius, you will restore peace to a wounded heart, you will reanimate some stifled sentiments, some tender affections, which will constitute his happiness."

"Yes, virtue, and an unalterable purity have preserved in this dejected heart the

happy germ of every generous passion; it could only be lacerated, closed from them, but not wholly faded; it shall re-open completely to the voice of reason and of friendship. Alas! he asks, he calls for truth—he shall know it; I will restore him to all his duties. Ah! how I wish those days of glory and of happiness were arrived, when I shall see this generous and feeling prince the idol of his subjects, and the model for all great monarchs; when I shall say to myself, history can speak of him only with admiration."

Mademoiselle de la Fayette prolonged this conversation even to the dinner hour. Upon rising from table, she sat out for Saint Germain.

How delicious was the sentiment with which her soul was filled, in perceiving from a distance, that majestic forest, that beautiful terrace, that ancient chateau from which she had the evening before believed herself for ever banished!

The road that she traversed, the fields,

the trees, the most simple objects had for her a charm similar to that of novelty, and awakened interest by the most touching remembrance.

Yesterday the victim of calumny, dejected, desperate, she had fled; to-day she returns triumphantly—she was going to see Louis, and to find him happy.

A little before the entrance into Saint Germain, she perceived a female holding two little infants in her arms, and begging alms: naturally compassionate and generous, she was still more so at this moment; she is always well disposed and tender who is perfectly contented with him she loves. She had her carriage stopped.

"Poor woman!" she said, "I would have this day to thee also a day of happiness."

She gave to this female all the money she had in her purse, and asked her address, promising that she would go to see her the next morning.

"My God, madame!" said the poor woman, "I dwell with my mother and

my grandfather, in a cottage quite a ruin, a very little way from this."

"It matters not; I will be with you at seven o'clock. You are young—can you then find no work?"

"No, madame. My husband has been dead these six weeks; he was industrious, and supported us: his illness has made us expend and sell the little that we had; his death has left us in the depths of distress! I am left a widow with these twin-babies, whom I nurse, and charged with a paralytic mother and a very infirm old grandfather. All that I can do is to gather some herbs in the forest, and collect some pieces of dry wood. In this miserable state I am compelled to beg my bread; it is right I should do so, since it is also that which is to support my parents and my poor little ones."

"You shall beg no more," exclaimed Mademoiselle de la Fayette; "you shall have a happy, honorable existence! To-morrow, at seven o'clock, I will be at your cottage."

"Ah, my good lady! Heaven will recompense you! I will pray to God for you all the days of my life!"

"Pray also for the king; if he knew of your situation he would send you some relief—be sure of that."

"He hunts to-day; my grandfather has been in the forest in the hope of finding him in his way, and of being able to present to him a petition."

"If he should find him, he will return consoled.—Adieu, my dear friend, till to-morrow."

The first care of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, on arriving at Saint Germain, was to send into the town to purchase some linen, some villagers' dresses for men and women, and also child-bed linen.

The next day, followed only by an old *valet de-chambre,* she stole out from the chateau, and went on foot to the cottage, which she reached by half-past eight.

The poor woman waited her arrival on the step of the door. As soon as she

perceived Mademoiselle de la Fayette, she ran to her precipitately, exclaiming,

"Ah! my dear lady, all our happiness has come at once! Yesterday my grandfather gave his petition to the king, who read it, and gave him two louis. But this is not all—this morning, within a quarter of an hour, as my grandfather was going out to purchase some provisions, a lord came from the king to bring us six hundred livres, and to tell us, that besides this, his majesty would have our house repaired, and join to it a garden, and give us a cow and some hens! I have related to this good gentleman," continued the woman, "how I met you yesterday. He has been quite curious to know who you are. I told him I was not acquainted with your name. 'Has she not,' said he, 'large black eyes, and a small mouth? Is she not very fair, with a brilliant colour?' I said yes to all, for he fancied quite right. He wishes to see you; he waits expecting you in our cottage."

This recital, uttered with extreme volubility, made the heart of mademoiselle palpitate. She gave to the countryman the large packet that her valet de chambre carried; she ordered the latter to wait for her without the door, and she entered into the cottage.

After having passed through a very little room fallen into ruins, she entered a kind of impaired kitchen, where she saw the king seated on a wooden stool, at the side of the cradle of the twin-babies, which he gently rocked!

Mademoiselle de la Fayette paused; a few sweet tears coursed down her cheeks. The king started; he placed one finger on his lips to caution her not to betray him, for the peasant was behind her; then rising, he said,

"I have divined right!"

"What!" replied Mademoiselle de la Fayette, "it is the same thought and the same sentiment which re-unites us here."

"Ah! do you not know," replied Louis, "that I can have no others now,

and that the word *sympathy* can only imperfectly express the intimate union of two souls who may be more truly said to form but one. Thus," he continued, smiling, "I do not propose to partake between us both this good deed—whether it be you or I, is it not the same? As I have already given my orders to Boisenval for money, you must charge yourself only with properly employing it. Secure happiness to this good family, certain that all you may do from your own heart will be according to mine."

In finishing these words, pronounced with the most touching expression, the king quitted the cottage, and left Mademoiselle de la Fayette in an inexpressible transport of joy and admiration.

At the accustomed hour, Mademoiselle de la Fayette was at the queen's. It was in the last days of spring; the weather was hot and dry. Mademoiselle de la Fayette opened a window, and seated herself upon a large balcony. The king, after having paid his short visit to the

queen, seated himself at the side of Mademoiselle de la Fayette.

They both enjoyed happiness in finding themselves in some measure out of the chamber, though in sight of the maids of honor placed *vis-à-vis* to them at the opposite extremity of the apartment: but they turned away from them; they saw only heaven, the verdure, and the trees—they could not be overheard, and they had all the illusion of a *tête-à-tête*.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette, after having expressed all those feelings the scene of the morning had inspired, lost no time in speaking of the queen.

She was listened to coldly at first, but afterwards Louis complained bitterly of the queen, and of old ills and new grievances; he cited much of light and indiscreet discourse which had escaped her within a few days.

"How, sire!" said Mademoiselle de la Fayette, "do you allow any one to presume to repeat to you such things? Is not speaking ill of the queen failing in

respect to yourself? Besides, the intention cannot be doubted; they wish to incense you against her; and those who are capable of such a sentiment, are they not also of calumniating her? Supposing even that those unworthy occupations were scrupulously exact, can any one give an account of the air and of the tone of the queen, or even of her design? An innocent word said in pleasantry, and often in irony, may be perverted into a culpable and impertinent expression; and reflect, sire, that every serious report which accuses without positive and incontestible *proof*, not only may be, but is probably false. What ought to be thought of a report of this kind, made against a spouse and a queen! You, sire, who have much compassion, how could you forget that beautiful maxim of the holy writings? '*The prince who listens with favourable attention to false reports, should only have the wicked for ministers.*' "

" Those who have told me, are very faithful; I am sure of it."

"It is impossible that you can have had that incontestable proof, and still less that you should be assured of the veracity of these accusations, whilst there are accounts that aggravate and that justify!—In fact, were you not prejudiced against me, were you not persuaded that I was false, inconsistent, that I failed in principle and in honor?"

"Appearances have deceived those of good veracity."

"No, sire, you was told that all the world believed that I loved the Count de Soissons, and that was untrue; no one ever did entertain that idea. Falsehood always accompanies, more or less, accusations—the fear of its being discovered alone prevents the relators from carrying it further. A political prudence is, in this case, the sole check to impudence; and therefore it is, a king should be informed of all that actually does happen.

"Yes, doubtless, in things of importance; for useful pieces of information are not ac-

cusations. But would you wish to know, sire, what is the public opinion passed upon yourself? Judge yourself, and you will know it. Yes, sire, your great qualities and those happy gifts of nature that you have received and hold in trust for the welfare of others, are objected against you as a crime. In fact, your piety does not preserve you from that indolence and inactivity which religion condemns in the meanest subject, and which she reprobates in kings as a crime of the first magnitude. Your natural equity does not give you that vigilance which anticipates injustice, nor that courage to redress it. Your sensibility will be to you only a ceaseless torment from perpetual distrust. You are humane, your character is full of gentleness and sweetness, yet there is little clemency or mercy under your reign. You have great military talents, nevertheless you do not yourself direct the movements of the campaign, nor do you decide as you ought upon the declaration or cessa-

tion of war. Heaven has bestowed on you fine personal attractions, and you conceal your own charms; you are savage, inaccessible. Your mind is one formed to render your conversation pleasing, to seduce, to fascinate, and yet you are wrapt in silence. It is not you, sire, who encourage letters; another is named as their patron.

"Behold, sire, this is what is said of your majesty, not in the circle of the queen, but every where else throughout your empire; and behold this, which spies and accusers have not told you: at least add to the portrait, that I can listen to harsh truths not only without anger, but with gratitude.

"Ah! sire, I shall not say to you, that I obey your reiterated orders: but deign to think that in speaking thus to you, I have a thousand times more merit than if I should make you the avowal of my own faults. A detail of your errors is to me the most painful of all confessions!"

At these words, Louis, much affected, raised his eyes to heaven.

"Yes," he replied, "I can appreciate this noble language of the heart and of true virtue. It attaches me as much as it enlightens me."

"Allow then, sire, that I venture also to speak to you of the queen"—

"The queen hates me!"

"No, sire, she is hurt and wounded by your conduct towards her, and she has reason to be so; but in her heart she loves you."

"Ah! I am very certain of the contrary, there is a mutual antipathy. There can exist actual antipathy only between vice and virtue.—The queen is pious, amiable, intelligent, vivacious: her soul is great, generous, incapable of harbouring resentment."

"What an eulogium! thus you then deem me very criminal?

"I consider you on this head in error. To render justice to the queen, sire, nothing else is necessary than to know

her better, and to judge her impartially yourself. You will be surprised at the *agremens*, and even the solidity of her mind, at her very even temper, and a thousand good and rare qualities which render all those irresistibly attached to her who are without prejudice and individual malice, and have the honour of being about her person. She is adored by the public, who will with transport see you near her. Lastly, the interest of the state demands it; there is no heir to the throne."

This long discourse, these eulogiums, unmingled by censure, and uttered with so much warmth, were suspected by Louis. He said nothing in reply, and became grave and abstracted. The distrust natural to his character, persuaded him that Mademoiselle de la Fayette had imbibed for the queen an attachment stronger than that she had formed for him, and that she spoke in league with her. From this idea he thought himself in some measure sacri-

ficed. Mademoiselle de la Fayette, the confidante of the queen, acting only by her orders, was not for him that friend who had promised him a boundless confidence and devotion !

However he carefully concealed these reflections, and Mademoiselle de la Fayette did not suspect them. She thought only that the conversation had embarrassed him, and she dared not prolong it. The king spoke of other matters with a little abstraction, but without evincing the least displeasure. At the end of an hour and a half he withdrew.

This long conversation, this conspicuous restoration to favour, caused much commotion at Saint-Germain ; those who had foreseen it, did not fail to recall to Mademoiselle de la Fayette that her disgrace had produced no influence on their sentiments for her. They thought that this conduct authorized flattery the most excessive, and they universally lavished it upon her.

She rejected some, she received a great number, she believed that she had acquired many friends; happily, notwithstanding her natural candour and ingenuousness, her reason and her rectitude preserved her from imprudence and indiscretion. The queen who expected from her that confidence which had displaced Mademoiselle de Hautefort, questioned her eagerly upon the subject of her reconciliation with the king, and upon all he had said to her in their long conversation. Mademoiselle de la Fayette, who could without the slightest exaggeration have raised herself so much in the estimation of the queen, and taught her the value of such a friend, yet maintained silence, and was impenetrable. This reserve deeply hurt the queen, who did not dissemble the excess of her displeasure, and who from this moment treated Mademoiselle de la Fayette with extreme coldness.

The Duchess of Chevreuse, and other favourites, were incensed at not being able

to become initiated into some secrets, the knowledge of which might have opened a field for new intrigues; the result was, that they exasperated the queen yet more. This afflicted Mademoiselle de la Fayette without diminishing the desire shs felt to serve her. (5)

However the king, on his side, upon reflecting on all that Mademoiselle de la Fayette had said to him on the subject of the queen, was more and more confirmed in his first impression. Reasons to sanction their suspicions, and those the most specious, easily offer themselves to the minds of distrustful people: it seems that the whole strength of their imaginations consists in misleading and deceiving their judgment with the greatest degree of probability; a simple doubt becomes soon riveted in their mind, and they meditate on it, till it grows into conviction: it needs only this to bring forth and consign them to this unhappy trait of character, to that gloomy spirit which is always fertile in

chimerical suppositions, ingenious in composing these with art, dreaming only of plots and stratagems, every successive reflection augmenting the danger of them.

The king absorbed in such melancholy reveries, and unwilling to confide the source of his new chagrin to any one, suddenly quitted Saint Germain, and hastened to shut himself up at Versailles, which was then a hunting lodge; it was there that he always went when anxious to conceal his inquietude, to free himself from the attention and survey of his courtiers, and, above all, from the harassing, observant Richelieu.

The latter, instructed by Boisenval of the perfect justification of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, sensibly felt what empire such a being could acquire over the king; but yet, notwithstanding the last precipitate flight of the king, at the moment of so tender a reconciliation, had at once acquainted him that new

misunderstandings had arisen between him and Mademoiselle de la Fayette.

Boisenval could not give him any elucidation on this head; Louis, quite impenetrable, preserved an obstinate silence, and even sent away Boisenval to Saint Germain, with orders to remain there until his return. During this space of time, Mademoiselle de la Fayette enjoyed all that peaceful security which is the companion of an unsuspicious and artless heart; she was occupied with the delightful employment of re-establishing comfort and happiness in the family of the poor peasant of whom the king was the benefactor. With the tenderest, most affecting sensations, she re-visited that cottage where she had seen Louis rocking the cradle of the little twins, in that humble asylum whither a similar sentiment had drawn both at the same hour.

She had the house repaired and furnished; in particular, the old paralytic mother had a great easy-chair, some sheets, new curtains, and a good bed.

She also placed some chests full of linen, some tables and some chairs.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette begged the wooden stool on which the king had sat, it was a precious memento to her that she wished always to preserve; she sent it to her country house at Vincennes. The happiness of this family was completed by the purchase of a little meadow, and a piece of ground formed into an inner yard, and a garden.

Louis did not return from Versailles until the expiration of eight days; he learned, with evident surprise, the marked coldness of the queen for Mademoiselle de la Fayette: the favourites of the queen were so indiscreet that the cause of this change in her majesty became known; it was said, that Mademoiselle de la Fayette having been interrogated upon her interview with the king, had positively refused to reply.

At this intelligence, Louis, fluctuating between remorse and a lingering particle

of suspicion, was not yet entirely freed from his first apprehension.

May it not be artifice? Mademoiselle de la Fayette, in penetrating the source of his grief, had perhaps concerted this apparent misunderstanding with the queen? But to suspect Mademoiselle de la Fayette, this angelic being, of such dissimulation!

To Louis, without doubt, that idea was very repugnant, but still his habitual suspicion counteracted his esteem and admiration, and he mentally said—

"Ah, that I could be certain of being beloved! that I could blindly believe it! It is impossible that she can partake the sentiment with which she inspires me; I see only her perfections, and she discovers all my faults! With suasive sweetness of manner she details them, it is true, but with what actually inflexible severity at the same time; and what an interesting portrait she has drawn of the queen! If she thinks the queen so perfect, why should she not love her better

than me? No, she feels for me only gratitude and compassion, a degree of pity which is in fact only founded on contempt. In all she does, she is guided only by a sentiment of duty, and a wish for glory. No, she loves me not. I shall never find myself beloved, I am always deceived, betrayed. It is my fate to discover only ingrates in the objects of my most ardent affections!"

It was thus that this envenomed heart became a silent prey to anguish and discontent. He again saw Mademoiselle de la Fayette; he testified the same tenderness towards her, and, far from being affected by the tranquil state in which he saw her at the end of eight days, he only attributed this sweet calm to apathy.

On the morrow he went to hunt in the wood of Vincennes; the chase led him near to the house of Mademoiselle de la Fayette. Having asked to whom that house belonged, he felt an inclination to enter it; suspicion always engenders curiosity; a vague expectation of some

unexpected event, and a desire, mingled with fear of discovering some important secret. Louis left all his suite in the wood—he entered alone into this edifice. The housekeeper shewed him every apartment. Passing by the right wing of the building, the housekeeper said, that, for some little time past, twelve orphans had been established there, under the superintendance of six women, solely charged with the employment of taking care of them; and over the door of that corridor, where these children slept, Louis read these words, traced in golden letters :—

THROUGH THE BENEFACTION OF THE KING.

In crossing the saloon, the first object which struck his view was his own bust, with this inscription :

PIETY, JUSTICE, AND GOODNESS.

The king, already overcome with emotion, saw in an alcove the crucifix of lapis-lazuli, which the Countess de Brégi

had bequeathed to her niece, and two pictures, the one representing Saint Louis, the head of the Bourbons and pátron of the king; and the other Saint Genevieve, protectress of France. Opposite the alcove was a seat of rustic form, with a covering ornamented with a superb silver fringe, and the arms of the king embroidered upon it in gold.

"What is this piece of furniture?" asked Louis.

The housekeeper smiled as she replied, "It is very ugly, but its covering is rich and beautiful; mademoiselle values it so highly she has actually placed it in her chamber, and forbidden any one to touch it; without the express command of your majesty I should not dare to raise the cover."

"I will raise it myself, then;" and Louis uncovered the mysterious seat, recognizing at the same instant the wooden stool on which he had sat in the cottage.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette had, with her own hand, written on the back,

ONE AND THE SAME THOUGHT!

The heart of Louis was deeply affected; he raised his eyes, filled with tears, and saw above the stool a picture which represented him seated at the side of the cradle, and rocking the two little infants. The principal figure was so placed as to avoid the countenance being seen; but he could not mistake himself.

The housekeeper preceding him, opened the door of a study of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, saying, with a satisfied air—

"It is this your Majesty will find the most beautiful."

The king followed her; and after having gone some steps into this little room, and looked around, he felt so agitated, that he wished to be left some moments to himself; he sent away the housekeeper, and threw himself into a chair, veiling his eyes bathed in tears, with both his hands.

This library was full of small pictures, painted to perfection, which represented remarkable events in the campaigns of the king. They were a series of drawings, in which the king was depicted in the most brilliant moments of his life! Louis found himself surrounded by all his glory, which the tenderest of sentiments had wished to consecrate the memory of; and he every moment retraced his own portrait.

At once confounded, transported, overwhelmed with remorse, intoxicated with gratitude and passion, Louis at length knew to what an extent he was beloved! He had before this day admired Mademoiselle de la Fayette with enthusiasm; but he had never felt the certain conviction of being himself passionately loved. No more of doubt, no more of suspicion, no more of fear—he knew her heart as well, perhaps better than she did herself!

"Ah, first day of my life!" he cried, "what a divine light is shed over my existence! I am beloved, and for myself,

in silence, in seclusion, in the deepest mystery! When can I ever again doubt her sincerity—when can I accuse this heart so tender: far from every eye, and even by myself unknown, she was occupied only with me! Ah, may she ever be ignorant of the last injustice I have done her, more culpable a thousand times than all the rest! I will fly to seek her, I feel as if I was about to see her for the first time: she has never avowed to me those sentiments that I have here discovered:—Ah, that I could compel her to speak as she does in private!"

The king quite lost in love, arose; recalled the housekeeper, hastily passed through the house, remounted his horse, and, without stopping a moment, bent his course back to Saint Germain.

He saw Mademoiselle de la Fayette, who marked in his manner much of fire and vivacity, but she was no longer surprised at it, when she was informed he had visited her house at Vincennes.

She blushed for the joy and delight of

Louis; his impassioned accent shewed her fully all the importance he attached to this discovery; she felt some vague scruples again arise from the depths of her heart, scruples that she had more than once before dispersed; she constrained the tenderness of her own expressions; she had never seen the king so familiar, so confident with her, he had never spoken to her with so much of energy and of unrestrained passion.

Intimidated, yet seduced, she ventured only a half reply, but she listened to him with delight. To calm her troubled conscience she again spoke of the queen; Louis regarded her with tenderness.

"Ah!" said he, "when *you* ask, who can refuse you? Ah! without doubt you ought to love me, you who know me as I am! If others admire you, if others adore so many charms united to so many virtues, what sentiments ought I not to feel?"

"Ah, sire! then prove to me this holy

friendship by fulfilling the sacred duties of a husband!"

"I will obey you."

"Permit me to ask one favour more, you can accord it to me at once."

"Command it."

"Recall Mademoiselle de Hautefort—restore her to the queen."

At this unexpected request, Louis astonished, remained for a moment without replying; at last he said in a voice of emotion—

"Who is there that could refrain admiring you in every thing? Yes, I can again see Mademoiselle de Hautefort, alike without anger and without danger. One object alone now engrosses my heart—the past is effaced from my memory; I have not with long reasoning dispersed all other remembrances, for one thought always present has banished them all from my imagination without leaving a trace behind! Oh, tell me no more of past crimes, of past faults, I did not then

live, you have created me! Your tender affection can alone preserve that soul you have deigned to animate with so lively and so pure a flame. If you should abandon me, I should sink into nothing —with you I should be capable of executing all that you could inspire of the most elevated! I will return to the queen, I will announce to her the recall of Mademoiselle de Hautefort."

Saying this, the king rose and went to the queen, who was very much surprised at seeing him.

This princess had in her apartment the Duchess of Chevreuse, the Marchioness of Senecé, her lady of honour, and the Marchioness de Beaumont, who had returned from Paris that very day. The king asked the queen, after some light conversation, where Mademoiselle de Hautefort was, and then added with much address, that her absence had been sufficiently lengthened, it would be proper to write to her to induce a return.

At these words astonishment was de-

picted upon every countenance, and the first sentiment of the queen was that of joy and gratitude.

Louis was seated at her side, leaning on the back of her chair, and inclining towards her as if he wished even to whisper privately: this soft familiar manner, his animated air, his smiling countenance, caused as much astonishment as the intelligence he came to announce; all the ladies rose and retired from the apartment. Louis upon finding himself *tête-à-tête* with the queen for the first time after a great many years, experienced momentary embarrassment, but in reflecting for whom, and by whose desire he acted, he easily overcame this inward annoyance."

"I wish," said he, "that you should know the return of Mademoiselle de Hautefort has been requested by Mademoiselle de la Fayette."

These words wounded the pride of the queen, who replied, with bitter irony, "I am not surprised that you have ac-

corded to Mademoiselle that which you have so often refused to me!"

"For above two years," returned Louis, "you have never spoken of her to me; that subject, which formerly would have been painful to me is indifferent now; there is nothing in this offensive to you."

"Yes," replied the queen, "I believe in truth that *now* you will see Mademoiselle de Hautefort with perfect indifference."

"Why? friendship is not an exclusive sentiment."

"I could renew the friendship I had for Mademoiselle de Hautefort, without lessening that I have for Mademoiselle de la Fayette."

"Ah! that is impossible."

"Then you think it is love?"

The queen smiled, and was silent.

"You agree with me then?" replied the king. "Very well, why should you have so much favoured this inclination, why should you have always procured

me with so much pleasure and complacency the opportunities of approaching Mademoiselle de Hautefort? Why did you always treat her as your dearest friend, and why appear cold to and incensed against Mademoiselle de la Fayette?"

These were pressing questions; the queen was able to reply only by saying, that Mademoiselle de la Fayette had never been her friend, and that she had not changed towards her.

The king again resumed in a grave tone—

"I believe also that you do justice to my principles, to my honour, and that you think too wisely not to pay to Mademoiselle de la Fayette the just tribute of that praise which is due to her character, her understanding, and her general conduct."

"I esteem her, but I do not wish to have the appearance of being protected by her."

"In employing a word which can

never be applicable to you, you reply neither with reason, nor with dignity, not even with justice, for I do not give you the appearance of being served by Mademoiselle de la Fayette, when I only repeat to you what she said to me. For the rest, I hope that in acknowledgment for an obliging act, I shall see you satisfied and grateful, and that I shall not witness only anger and discontent—it is a misfortune."

"I alone shall suffer from"—

"No, I wish to see you happy."

"Ah! if that were true, I should be so!"

"Have confidence in me, we will see each other to-morrow. I wish it to be a *tête-à-tête* meeting; perhaps we shall come to a better understanding."

These words, pronounced with the great charm of a sweet and tender manner, had a lively effect upon the queen. Louis did not wait her reply, he retired immediately.

The ladies re-appeared; the queen was

agitated, but it was obvious that this emotion was excited by an agreeable sentiment. The queen, in this interview, had experienced a kind of revolution in her mind for which she could not account. She had till then only seen in the king a weak man, deceived and duped by his friends, incapable of inspiring a sincere attachment. Since her marriage, in her society they had spoken of him only to condemn or to turn him into ridicule.

Thus prepossessed and perpetually angered, she had scarcely remarked that he was handsome, very witty, and formed to please. However, the most beautiful woman, at least a being the most charming from the rare union of qualities, at once the most brilliant and the most solid, sincerely loved the king, and that without ambition—for himself alone.

This reflection had excited in the mind of the queen a degree of curiosity, a secret desire to examine the king, and in fact to know if it was possible to find him charming and attractive.

An examination made but superficially, had nevertheless left much of trouble, of tenderness, and inquietude. She did not speak of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, but she highly praised the king.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette must have been at the height of her wishes; the king, a thousand times more affectionate and confiding than ever, suffered himself to be blindly led by her, and yet she was uneasy, restless, and agitated; new scruples arose confusedly from the depth of conscience.

The innocence of her life, the purity of her heart and of her imagination could yet deceive her upon her own sentiments; but she could not be entirely blinded to those of the king.

Delicacy and innate modesty in a female easily veil love even from the observation of him who inspires it; but a man knows neither how to disguise nor to restrain a passionate sentiment.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette read it with delight in the heart of Louis, but at

the same time she was alarmed at the passion she had discovered.

She passed every evening with Madame de Beaumont; the latter congratulated her on her success, and on the extraordinary steps she had influenced the king to take. "You will obtain from him every thing," she said; "you will, indeed, make him a king—a great man! He is already scarcely to be recognized, even in his exterior. His tone, his manner, even the expression of his countenance is altered; he is more affable, he is less silent, he is more courteous and obliging. Proceed, you will change the destiny of France!"

Mademoiselle de la Fayette listened in silence to this flattering discourse.

Madame de Beaumont, surprised at her melancholy, put some questions to her, and Mademoiselle de la Fayette burst into tears.

"O heavens! what ails you?" cried Madame de Beaumont.

"Ah! my friend," replied Made-

moiselle de la Fayette, "without doubt I am loved; I am perhaps too much so."

"Can you then mistake a friendship so pure for a culpable sentiment? and shall this vain scruple make you renounce the glory of drawing this excellent prince from so long a lethargy? What are your projects? To restore a re-union with the queen, to inspire him with a taste for labour, exertion, and activity; to free him from the tyranny of the cardinal, to render him accessible and clement.—You must consummate this great work."

"But to seduce his reason—to inspire a criminal passion!"

"Has he made you the avowal of such a passion?"

"No; but if every thing declares it?"

"Is it not sufficient that you have nothing to reprehend in his language? Besides, who could give limits to an attachment so well founded? You never had a declaration of love, how can you recognize it?"

"I know not; but his looks embarrass me—the tone of his voice is no longer the same—the friendship that I have imbibed for him is the most lively and the most tender that could be felt, and I love with a composure that I do not witness in him—it is in fact he who now intimidates me. The sight of the queen involuntarily agitates me. I consider, that she is his wife. Ah! it is his heart that I must restore!"

"That depends neither upon you, nor yet even upon the king."

"And if I am the obstacle?"

"Who tells you so? are you ignorant that they never did love?"

"It is said so; but how can I believe that his wife has never loved him?"

"It is a fact then, and can you doubt if you were to give an account of your conversations with the king, she would not have favoured your connexion all in her power? She believed him in love with Mademoiselle de Hautefort, and she was delighted at it."

"Yes, she does not love! this idea

consoles me. Besides, this word I ought never to hear, this culpable wórd he has never pronounced. My fears calumniate him, perhaps."

"Be assured of it."

"And friendship, is not that a passion when it is founded on admiration and a boundless confidence?"

"It is true that I would surrender up my life for him, and that there are no sacrifices I could not make to him."

"Be re-assured, then, and pursue this noble work with tranquillity."

This conversation, without entirely freeing Mademoiselle de la Fayette from her scruples, restored composure for some time to her mind.

The Marchioness de Beaumont was perfectly persuaded in her own mind, that Louis was deeply in love with her friend, and that the latter partook his sentiments. The marchioness had some principle, some generosity, and a sincere attachment for Mademoiselle de la Fayette; but almost all young people, and even the

most honourable, are dangerous confidants in affairs of this nature.

Women in such a case always naturally take the part of love. They defend romances which appear to them interesting. Besides, Madame de Beaumont enjoyed by anticipation the glory which she pictured in future as her friend's, and perhaps also a little from the idea of the influence and the favour she should herself one day derive from it. We often conceal from ourselves our own ambition; it is easy to attribute the secret movements of it to the zeal of friendship.

For eight days nothing was spoken of at Saint Germain, but the favour enjoyed by Mademoiselle de la Fayette, and the extraordinary ascendancy she had acquired over the king, who constantly abided by her counsels, and who had been brought to declare he would himself distribute his own benefactions!

The cardinal knew, through Boisenval, that the king wrote every day to Mademoiselle de la Fayette: and as soon as he

had these letters secretly carried to him, he read them quite through; they were then neatly re-sealed, and received without any suspicion of this audacious breach of honour. (6)

The cardinal could not refrain from admiring the purity of this correspondence, the angelic character, and the lofty sentiments of Mademoiselle de la Fayette. He saw the king was passionately in love. At last he said to Chavigny, the king is in love, and for the first time. This is a serious passion, who knows to what lengths it may extend! It is necessary to speak to Father Caussin. Father Caussin was the confessor of the king and of Mademoiselle de la Fayette. The cardinal evinced the liveliest inquietude for *the conscience* of the king; that is to say, for his attachment to Mademoiselle de la Fayette.

Father Caussin replied with good-nature, that this friendship was very useful to the salvation of the king and the welfare of France. He detailed reasons to

this effect; and he added, that he was certain this connexion was perfectly innocent, and that it had already been the means of re-uniting the king and the queen.

Notwithstanding these assurances, the cardinal maintained all his *scruples*; and as the good father replied to him always with the same simplicity, he changed the subject, spoke to him of his promotion, offered his protection, and proposed to him a bishopric. Father Caussin replied with modesty and innocence, that he had no ambition, and that he was satisfied with his situation. (7)

He left the cardinal very discontented, and very disturbed.

"The king is subjugated, and at the same time exalted," said the cardinal to Chavigny. "Mademoiselle de la Fayette is a romantic being, replete with spirit, energy, and courage. Father Caussin is an imbecile character, who comprehends nothing, and who aspires to nothing! Ah, this becomes embarrassing, I must reflect upon it maturely."

Father Caussin, in effect, very ignorant of the subtlety of love, traced only virtuous friendship in this chaste attachment, and doubted not that Mademoiselle de la Fayette was solely occupied at this moment in reconciling the king and queen; his mind had engendered neither the scruples nor the apprehensions of the cardinal. He exhorted Mademoiselle de la Fayette to remain at court, and reassured her with sincerity on those sources of disquietude that had not entered into his own imagination.*

Mademoiselle de Hautefort was expected at the court with extreme impatience; some desired her return, from mere curiosity; others, in the hope that she would resume her former influence over the heart of Louis, and that she would cause her to be banished by whom she had been supplanted. Among this number many were to be found, who were neither the enemies of Mademoiselle

* Historical.

de la Fayette, nor the friends of Mademoiselle de Hautefort; and who only wished the change, from flattering themselves they might possibly benefit by it in some shape or other.

Mademoiselle de Hautefort at last arrived. Previous to making her re-appearance at Saint Germain, she had gathered on her journey all the news of Paris.

She was told, that the cardinal, to ruin Mademoiselle de la Fayette, had brought about the re-union of the king and queen; that the latter had obtained from the king the recall of Mademoiselle de Hautefort, and the sacrifice of Mademoiselle de la Fayette. They predicted to Mademoiselle de Hautefort, that she would regain all her influence over the king; and that, being the favourite of the queen also, she would consequently govern the court completely.

In the midst of all these conjectures, which had little resemblance to truth, it is remarkable that no voice, no suspicion

was excited against the prudence of Mademoiselle de la Fayette; they accused her of ambition, but they universally did justice to the purity of her conduct and her virtue *.

Mademoiselle de Hautefort, full of the most brilliant hopes, arrived at Saint Germain two hours before that appointed for the queen's circle : this princess received her with a great effusion of sensibility, however she expected it, and it was not from her alone that she looked for it.

A large concourse on this evening assembled in the circle of the queen, desirous of seeing the two rivals meet; and, above all, anxious to observe what impression the first appearance of Mademoiselle de Hautefort would produce upon the king. At length Mademoiselle de Hautefort was seen, very much dressed, with a countenance full of confidence,

* Historical.

and a triumphant air, placed behind the queen, often whispering her, smiling as with secret meaning, and seeking to draw and rally round her all her old partisans.

At the same time Mademoiselle de la Fayette, always clothed in black, and conspicuous only from her dazzling beauty, was directed to her seat by chance; simple, natural, without desiring it, she attracted and fixed upon herself every eye.

At last the king appeared; he again saw Mademoiselle de Hautefort without evincing the slightest emotion; he spoke to her with sweetness and affability: this was worse than a coldness which might have been attributed to the remains of resentment; it spoke perfect indifference, a complete oblivion of the past! Louis, after having taken some turns in the apartment, stationed himself near Mademoiselle de la Fayette, and remained at her side for nearly three quarters of an hour.

This evening cleared up every doubt, and annihilated every false conjecture. Every one remained convinced that Mademoiselle de Hautefort would no longer play a part; that Mademoiselle de la Fayette was permanently established. From this moment she became the universal object of her age, and flattery put her most ingenious and subtile engines in play to please and attract her. But in the society of the queen, Mademoiselle de la Fayette was treated with open malevolence; and, above all, Mademoiselle de Hautefort could not dissemble her jealousy and her indignation. When Mademoiselle de la Fayette appeared, they had the air of mistrusting her; if they were engaged in conversation, it abruptly ceased; they spoke in a lowered tone, or made significant signs; and some even went so far, they did not affect an equivocal conduct towards her, but openly evinced a desire to displease and offend her.

Mademoiselle de Hautefort had drawn into this little conspiracy only the Duchess of Chevreuse, the Marchionesses of Senecé and Chavigny; all the rest regarded with deference Mademoiselle de la Fayette, who, always calm, noble, and consistent, shewed neither disdain nor astonishment, and did not even appear to remark this unpleasant and affected manner of seeking to hurt and disoblige her. The queen had become cold and frigid in her manner towards Mademoiselle de la Fayette, but with negative kindness; neither authorized nor reprimanded the conduct of her favourites.

For some time, though the king was infinitely improved in his conduct towards her, yet the princess appeared absorbed in a profound melancholy; she complained of her health; and as there was not thought to be any source of chagrin, particularly at that time, the visible alteration in her character and disposition was attributed entirely to physical causes.

One morning when the Marchioness de Beaumont was in the apartment of the queen with that princess, the Duchess de Chevreuse, and Mademoiselle de Hautefort, the latter amused herself with ridiculing the prolonged mourning worn by Mademoiselle de la Fayette. The queen took up the subject.

"Why," said she, "should you see merely ridiculous affectation, where only a touching and respectful sentiment may be traced?"

"Madame," replied the marchioness, "pray let your kindness dispense with a reply to this question from Mademoiselle de Hautefort."

These few words engaged them in a dialogue, animated and poignant; in which Madame de Beaumont had the advantage and defended Mademoiselle de la Fayette with much vivacity and warmth.

Indignant at not being supported by the queen, who preserved a profound silence, Mademoiselle de Hautefort lost

sight of prudence; and even gave her to understand, that she hated Mademoiselle de la Fayette because she had not revealed to the queen all that the king had communicated to her; and that this mysterious conduct proved that a culpable intrigue had existed!

At these words the queen surveyed her with an expression of indignation. "I know from the king," she interrupted her by saying, "all that has passed from the lips of Mademoiselle de la Fayette to him; and she it was who of her own accord requested your recall, and who is only occupied in re-uniting him to me."

This speech was as a clap of thunder to Mademoiselle de Hautefort, and struck Madame de Beaumont with strong admiration. In fact, there was much greatness of soul in sacrificing self-love to justify a rival! But the queen could not pardon Mademoiselle de Hautefort for having uttered that which extorted this act of justice.

The queen till then had concealed it in

profound secrecy, even from her most confidential associates (they perhaps always taking the part of Mademoiselle de la Fayette), and now she had revealed it with little reflection, for the first involuntary movements of fine minds are always sublime! reflection, far from improving them in general, only represses or chills; for that too often presents egotism and vanity under the semblance of prudence and reason.

The Marchioness de Beaumont, in admiring the noble equity of the queen, knew not however all the merit of this action: she fancied in the queen an apathy that was no longer hers; and it was upon the same idea that she rested in security the repose of Mademoiselle de la Fayette.

The king, however, was now solely engrossed with the assiduous care of pleasing Mademoiselle de la Fayette, and more particularly when she did not require him to deliver himself up to laborious devotion to public affairs.

He wished to give a *fête* in the forest of Saint Germain: it was in the month of July; and Mademoiselle de la Fayette, informed of this intention, begged him to select Saint Anne's day, she being the patroness of the queen.

It was at the court, indeed, a strange and novel event, to see the king occupied with a *fête*, and to see him give it to the queen!

Each novelty at court puts every mind in motion: some are astonished, others unquiet: but of all personages, the most discontented at that period, was Mademoiselle de Hautefort; cruelly humiliated by the calm indifference of the king, expecting nothing further from the sentiments of the queen, incensed at the triumphs of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, she could not dissemble her inquietude, her anger, and ill-humour. What also quite contributed to overwhelm her, was the kind and gracious manner with which the queen always treated the Marchioness de Beaumont, the intimate friend of

Mademoiselle de la Fayette; and she testified the surprise it occasioned her, to the Duchess of Chevreuse.

"It is not astonishing," replied the latter, "that, after a long absence, the court should have become to you an inexplicable scene. People in this place appear more changeable than elsewhere, beçause, in a court, they never act with consistency of character, but only from the influence of their passions, and the impulse of self interest. Thus the brilliant and gay Count de Soissons, having imbibed a passionate attachment for Mademoiselle de la Fayette, is become melancholy and romantic. The king gives *fêtes*; the prudent and haughty La Fayette does not dissemble her partiality for the king, and she endures the coldness of the queen, and our epigrams, without appearing wounded by them; and, lastly, the queen is become sorrowful and abstracted . . ."

"Some deep distress appears to consume her heart; it admits no confidence;

what secret can it be that she conceals from us?"

"I cannot surmise. She finds a husband in the king."

"Do you believe it?"

"I am very certain of it... This miracle has been wrought by Mademoiselle de la Fayette; the queen in my presence has confessed it."

"Mademoiselle de la Fayette acts from the deepest policy. The queen is sensible of it; and it is terrible for her to owe the restoration of her husband only to the ambition of her rival!"

"Yes, without doubt, the pride of the queen revolts—"

"To have *fêtes* nominally given to her, while inclination would bestow them upon another!"

"Such, in fact, is the *fête* of St. Anne, which is to take place in a few days."

"The king, who has never thought of such a thing in the finest days of their youth, suddenly embraces the idea of celebrating it when the queen is five-and-

thirty—and with the taste the king has for *fêtes!*"

"But he says it is for her, and the queen appears to believe it."

"It is better she should; but what a humiliation, when every one is sensible that her rival is the object of the *fête*."

"Her *rival!* this word appears so extraordinary to me! When the king was in love with you, we never gave you that appellation."

"Because I never returned his love; I treated it with raillery; I told every thing to the queen; you know I did."

"It must then be acknowledged that the *rivalship* of Mademoiselle de la Fayette has been more serviceable than your fidelity, which only produced quarrels and animosity . . . This girl does not please me; she is not amusing herself, for she actually loves the king."

"And it is this which must offend the queen."

"She is more than offended; her heart suffers—and this is her secret."

"Her heart! No, we all very well know she has never loved the king."

"But the human heart has so many caprices! The king, in the estimation of the queen, and that of all her circle, has become attractive and interesting; he is not what he was with them. He loves, and is beloved. The throne, imposing as are its prerogatives, cannot always prove a preservative from ridicule: we have seen that it cannot. But to please, to inspire a violent passion, and to partake it, gives apparently a personal consideration, a kind of consequence and weight above that even of the most elevated rank:—the king is no longer laughed at."

"How! can you believe that the queen . . ."

"Yes, she sees that a lovely vivacious woman of much taste can love the king exclusively; it is a discovery which has been made rather late, and even that renders it the more painful."

"How will all this end?"

Notwithstanding her jealousy, the queen, bound by gratitude, will never dare to complain. The king will remain beneath the yoke, and his most courageous actions will spring from his own weakness. The cardinal will be overthrown; and Mademoiselle de la Fayette will reign with less talent than the prime minister, but with quite as much arrogance and despotism."

"All France will most likely revolt," said the duchess, laughing; "and we shall only have one chance left us, that then we may play some active part; but now, we are condemned to be complete nonentities."

Such gloomy predictions caused much anxiety in the little circle of the queen; for many other members of it had the same opinion of the ambition and the power of Mademoiselle de la Fayette.

Presages which announced the fall of Richelieu, became matter of rejoicing; but at the same time there was much apprehension entertained from the sovereign

empire of a person endowed with rectitude, elevation of soul, insensible to flattery, and loving the king for himself; in fact, at court a favourite of this disposition always appears a very alarming phenomenon.

The day before the eve of Saint Anne, the king and queen, followed by many persons of the court, among whom was Mademoiselle de la Fayette, visited at Longchamps a charitable institution erected by Saint Vincent.(8)

Upon quitting this little hospital for monks, the king wished to proceed on foot to the wood of Boulogne, whither all the carriages had been sent.

About twenty feet from the edifice, the queen and all her suite saw from a distance a troop of young girls advancing, who came with an offering of flowers, and an address to the queen.

The king, who was at the side of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, said aloud to the queen, in a laughing manner, that he wished to avoid the harangue, and

that he would therefore precede her majesty, and wait for her at some little distance; and in the same low tone he proposed to Mademoiselle de la Fayette to be the companion of his flight, offering her his arm; and immediately led her forward, leaving every one astonished at his gay and vivacious manner.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette could not possibly refuse to accompany the king, but she feared the effect which this kind of scene would produce upon so many witnesses.

The king kept her arm under his, closely pressing it, as if he were apprehensive she would escape, and at the same time he walked on with extreme quickness.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette followed him with those unequal steps which are always obvious in a constrained movement. Distress and anxiety were painted upon her countenance; the king did not guide, he drew her on; it was not a walk, it seemed much more as though she was carried off.

Their strong emotion and the rapidity

of their steps caused a palpitation in the hearts of both. Far from having that gaiety, that confidence he had just exhibited, Louis now turned pale and trembled; a deep and melancholy sentiment, mingled with his agitation; he found an inexpressible charm in this imprudent flight, and even in the idea that he drew away Mademoiselle against her own will. He had subjugated her, but he thought also, even in the moment of triumph and happiness, that it was but an illusion.

They were soon at six hundred paces distant from the group, among whom the queen had stopped with as much impatience as chagrin. All at once the heavens seemed inclosed; dark black clouds rapidly spread over the sky, and day appeared almost entirely to vanish.

"Ah, sire!" cried Mademoiselle de la Fayette, "whither would you conduct me?"

As she said these words, a flash of lightning darted from a cloud, and at the same instant a clap of thunder re-

sounded so violently, that Mademoiselle de la Fayette thought the bolt had fallen! She uttered a piercing scream which penetrated to the depths of the soul of Louis. He took her in his arms, blessing the storm, and redoubling the quickness of his steps. He carried her in this manner more than a hundred paces; at last he gently disengaged her from his arms, but in doing so she could scarcely support herself.

Flashes of lightning and tremendous thunder succeeded in an alarming manner; a heavy rain, mingled with hail-stones, accompanied it. Louis opened his coat, and spread one side of it over the shoulders of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, whom he kept pressed against his breast: he took off his hat, and turning down the brim of it, held it over her head, notwithstanding her entreaties that he would take care of himself.

It was at a little distance from Long-champs, an ancient convent of *religieuses*,

founded by Isabella, daughter of Saint Louis, who had there consecrated herself to God! The king perceiving a peasant coming out of the church, called to him, made himself known, and asked him to go to the hospital of monks, and tell the queen that he had gained shelter; that she must remain at the hospital, not only till the carriages came which had been sent to the wood of Boulogne, but until the rain had ceased, as their carriages were open ones; and that there he would himself seek her; and while giving this order, he offered up fervent prayers for the continuance of the storm!

The doors of the exterior church of the *religieuses* were open; it only contained some priests, for the villagers had been prevented coming. They were just concluding the solemn consecration of a young noviciate, who was about to pronounce her vows.

The appearance of the king was a great event at this awful moment. The priest of Longchamps, with the attendant

clergy, came to receive and conduct him to the grate which separated this small church from that of the nuns. The black curtain of the grate was thrown open, and through the grate was seen the pall, extended over the prostrate *religieuse*, who was about to renounce the world and all its illusions! Some funeral hymns were chaunted....

The holy spectacle struck Mademoiselle de la Fayette; the disorder of her imagination and the troubled state of her heart, rendered her the more susceptible of reçeiving lively and profound impressions: she fell on her knees on the stone at some distance from the king, and behind him. At the moment in which the pall was raised, the priest advanced to present to the king the long black veil which was destined for ever to cover the young nun, that the prioress might then receive it from the hand of the king, and give it to him.

Louis turned; he advanced some steps to take the veil, and found himself at the

side of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, still upon her knees, praying with fervour, and reverentially bent!

Louis surveyed her with the tenderest emotion. In this moment of abstraction of thought, the veil accidentally dropped from his hands; it fell upon the head of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, and completely covered her face! She remained motionless.

Louis started; he hastily seized the veil, raised it, uncovered, and again gazed on that cherished face still bent downwards with humid eyes, and cheeks pale and bathed with tears!

Louis contemplated it with strong emotion. He thought he saw in her the victim of the sacrifice about to be consummated; he took her hand, saying with wildness, and a broken voice—"Rise, where are you?"

"On a tomb!" she replied, gazing around her.

In fact, she was on her knees on a sepulchral stone.

The words, "on a tomb," completed the chilling emotion of the king.—

It was, however, necessary the ceremony should be finished. The king advanced with unsteady step towards the grate; he gave the fatal veil with a trembling hand: the next moment the curtain was drawn over the grate, and a profound silence followed the funereal chaunt.

The storm had continued without any cessation of its violence; the priest came to receive the orders of the king, who wished to wait the close of the tempest in the vestry, where he remained with Madame de la Fayette.

There resting on two seats of straw, and left alone, Mademoiselle de la Fayette, surveying the king, whose hair and garments were still wet, said,

"Great God! what a terrific storm, and how your majesty has suffered from it!"

"Suffered!" repeated Louis, "Ah! do not believe it: this day has been the most precious of my life:—I have been

so happy during all the time of our walk. I fled the malignant and curious court, who observe us, and who separate us! Alone with you, the world was all centered in that road which we traversed together! Freed from a troublesome suite and all the shackles of grandeur, restored to nature, with what delight I breathed the pure air of the fields and of liberty! How enchanting did that scenery appear to me which we passed together: but I saw with pain, even then, the beaten tract of a road I wished to efface, and never again behold!....Happier, a thousand times happier, if with you I could have wandered into inaccessible solitude, never more to return therefrom!"

Here the voice of Louis failed; he paused.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette held down her eyes; a vivid colour flushed her cheeks.

"And you," replied the king, "you who are the object of so tender a sentiment; are you then unmoved?"

"Ah! sire," she replied, "my heart is always the same. But this morning nothing has so deeply affected my mind as the holy spectacle which awaited us in this religious sanctuary! I shall often recall this unexpected, awful sight, and always with emotion! I shall retrace it in that moment when the most tremendous peals of thunder made these vaults resound: I felt the religious veil fall as an immense weight upon my head; that heavy and chilling veil fell from your hands!........A deathlike coldness ran through my veins....I remained motionless, annihilated! It seemed to me that a Supreme Power riveted me there for ever, plunged in the eternal sleep of death!....Ah! if this should be a presentiment; if Heaven, who knows far better than ourselves the inmost recesses of our hearts, should condemn the sentiment which unites us, if it ordains our separation...."

"Ah, sire!"....A gust of tears inter-

rupted her voice, she covered her face with her handkerchief.

"No, no!" exclaimed the king, "Heaven protects this holy friendship formed for my glory, and for the happiness of France! Are you not the titular saint of this empire? Without you, truth would be harsh and severe to me; without you, how should I know all my duties; and without you, even knowing them, should I have resolution to fulfil them? Ah! far from alarming yourself with the sentiments that you inspire, they should be to you a pledge the most certain of the divine protection; they have elevated my mind and fortified my character. It is a celestial fire which has purified my heart!—Prescribe, order, I can no longer make sacrifices; it is from inclination, it is with enthusiasm that I now obey the sacred laws of duty and of virtue; it is only obeying you and drawing myself still closer towards you!"

This seducing and dangerous language took too much effect on the heart of Ma-

demoiselle de la Fayette; her fears and her scruples vanished; admiration, joy, and the purest, most tender love effaced even their remembrance. She resigned herself entirely to a fancied security of innocence, and to a blind and devoted confidence.

This conversation lasted nearly an hour. The king apologized for his recent conduct; he painted the ambition of her mother, but he shed some tears in speaking of her exile; he promised to recall her, and he was justified on this ground in the eyes of Mademoiselle de la Fayette. He altogether evinced so much penetration and discernment in drawing the portrait of Richelieu, that Mademoiselle de la Fayette was persuaded that he who could so well observe and discriminate, could neither possess a weak mind, nor fail in decision of character himself; and it is an error into which those people often fall who have strong minds, they think it is quite sufficient, and that nothing more is wanting than to discern clearly. And doubtless the first

of human beings may sometimes wander and go astray in darkness. It requires the light of day to take with security a difficult journey; but what would be the light to him, who, by irrepressible sloth and indolence, will not follow the guide? The extreme and most complete proof of weakness is not to be blinded by circumstance; it is, on the contrary, that which is evinced when a man is fully sensible of the path he ought to pursue, and yet has not resolution to enter it.

The king, while detailing the faults and errors of Richelieu, much exalted his talents, and the service he was of to France; but he pledged his word to be indefatigable in obtaining proper instruction, and learning all that was advisable to render him capable of reigning alone, and to dismiss Richelieu as soon as peace should be proclaimed.

This promise once pronounced, Mademoiselle de la Fayette was fully satisfied; and Louis, to whom time was granted, gave his word to this effect, not

only with honour and sincerity, but with genuine gratification; it satisfied his hatred against the minister; it was a secret impulse of revenge, and which required no vigorous decisive act at the moment. Weak people readily make engagements for the future: distant projects do not alarm them, because they can more easily, and with more promptitude, presume upon their own strength than calculate it.

At last, the noise of approaching carriages was heard, and the conversation was from necessity concluded—a conversation which completely displayed the sentiments of Mademoiselle de la Fayette for the king, as well as the impassioned attachment of this prince to her.

They ascended their carriages, and found the queen melancholy and abstracted; she complained of a violent head-ache: the king was affable and obliging, he recounted with much ease, all that he could repeat about the storm, and the profession of the young nun.

Happiness and much abstraction of mind preserved Mademoiselle de la Fayette from that embarrassment which she might otherwise have betrayed: her thoughts entirely dwelt on the recent conversation, and on the promises pledged by the king.

She passed the whole of the evening *tête-à-tête* with Madame de Beaumont, to talk of the king, to praise him, to dwell on his remembrance, and to indulge those seducing hopes he had excited!

The day after the morrow was that of Saint Anne, and of the queen's *fête*. Louis, who had himself had the ordering of the whole, and invented all the amusements, announced that it would be celebrated in a part of the forest of Saint Germain, and that it would take place when the night was fully set in.

At the appointed hour, the queen, Mademoiselle de Guise, and Mademoiselle de Vendôme, the Duchess of Chevreuse, Mademoiselle de Hautefort, the Marchioness de Beaumont, and Mademoi-

selle de la Fayette, at the desire of the king, all entered one carriage, and he undertook to drive this open vehicle himself, saying that almost all the *fête* would consist in a promenade.

An infinite number of other carriages followed that of the queen.

They entered a long walk, to which the lamps, concealed beneath the foliage, gave only the softened light of a beautiful resplendent moon: they heard in distance some charming music in concert, which seemed to issue from the recesses of the forest.—Mystery, prudence, and timidity seemed couched under the whole: this was the ruling feature of the *fête*. In the midst of this walk, they stopped before a large arch, formed with festoons of roses; there was seen in perspective across some transparencies, an allegorical group, representing Truth, surrounded by rural divinities, who extended some little veils of gauze over the trees covered with cyphers, formed

of flowers, of which the eye could only distinguish some letters, when a chorus chaunted, in lowered tones, these words.

Pour oser offrir nos hommages
A la déité de ces bois,
Voilons ces chiffres, ces ombrages,
Point d'éclat, point de bruit, adoucissons nos voix !
Elle est modeste autant que belle,
L'éloge ne peut la flatter,
Et ce n'est jamais que loin d'elle
Qu'il est permis de la chanter.

Dans l'ombre épaisse du mystère
Elle dérobe à tous les yeux
Le bien caché qu'elle a su faire ;
Taisons-nous, respectons ses secrets généreux.
Elle est modeste autant que belle,
L'éloge ne peut la flatter,
Et ce n'est jamais que loin d'elle
Qu'il est permis de la chanter.

Lorsque sa bonté nous attire,
Ah ! du moins, disons-lui si bas
Ce que sans dessein elle inspire,
Que même en écoutant elle n'entende pas...
Elle est modeste autant que belle,
L'éloge ne peut la flatter,
Et ce n'est jamais que loin d'elle
Qu'il est permis de la chanter.

After having heard these verses, they passed through the remainder of the inclosure, after occasionally stopping to contemplate; but all around a kind of twilight reigned, objects partially veiled, sweet singing, pictures in distance, and mysterious, or warm and tender scenes. At last they descended from the carriage to enter a magnificently decorated ball-room, where they danced till daylight.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette had, during the whole procession, successively experienced every degree of emotion. She could not mistake the intention of the king; she knew but too well what was the real object of the *fête* and of these verses.

She found much of the ingenious and the touching in this novel *fête*. Great was the sensibility with which her heart appreciated the delicacy of the whole arrangement: but the confusion and tender embarrassment they inspired, was among too many curious and envious

observers not to alter the charm and sweetness of her gratitude.

The queen, during the *fête*, preserved a carriage at once the most simple and the most noble; she praised every scene without affectation, as teeming with new and pleasing inventions; she received with thanks the bouquet which Flora and the Hamadryades presented to her, when they performed a ballet in the ball-room.

Louis, who had not been without anxiety for the light in which this *fête* might have been regarded, was quite satisfied with her, and during the whole of the ballet, which lasted more than half an hour, he continued seated next her, conversing with an air of good-humour and familiarity which no one had ever before witnessed in his manner towards her.

The queen, affected by it, said little, but her eyes and the general expression of her countenance spoke her gratitude.

She had placed on a raised cushion, at her side, the bouquet she had received from the divinities of the wood. The king, rising, went to walk in the saloon; but first took a flower from the bouquet, which he gave to the queen, begging her to keep it.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette had retired to a little distance, but was seated in such a manner that she could perfectly well observe the king; her gaze was fixed upon him, and in the enjoyment of contemplating the effects of her own influence, she lost her own embarrassment.

Louis, after having taken some turns in the apartment, involuntarily approached Mademoiselle de la Fayette, and seating himself near her, said, smiling—

"Are you satisfied with me?"

These words were overheard; they were whispered in repetition throughout the room, but not without alteration. It was pretended that Mademoiselle de la Fayette had been heard to say very loud to the king, "I am satisfied with you."

This phrase was thus repeated to Mademoiselle de Hautefort and the Duchess de Chevreuse, who were seated immediately behind the queen. It could not be imagined that Mademoiselle de la Fayette, with so noble a carriage, and a character so perfectly delicate and reserved, was really capable of such an impropriety.

But Mademoiselle de Hautefort had credulity and hatred to support her belief of it; she repeated many times over, that it was strange, inconceivable!

The queen at last questioned her on the subject of her astonishment; she inclined her lips to her ear, and related what had just been said.

The queen blushed, and replied coldly, "I do not believe a word of it;" and soon afterwards, rising from her chair, she called the Marchioness de Beaumont and took her arm, saying she would promenade in the illuminated inclosure.

Mademoiselle de Hautefort and her other ladies prepared to follow her; she

prevented them and went out, attended only by the Marchioness of Beaumont, leaving the favourites, and, above all, Mademoiselle de Hautefort, in the greatest consternation.

When the queen was alone with the marchioness, she said to her, "Well, Madame de Beaumont, what do you think of this *fête?*"

"Madame," replied the Marchioness, a little embarrassed, "I have found it delightful, worthy of him who gives it, and her who is the object of it."

"And *she* who is not the *object;* what what ought *she* to feel?"

"How, Madame?"

"You perfectly comprehend me; in very truth, do you imagine it possible *I* can take to myself the verses sung?"

"And yet, Madame, all the eulogiums that they contain are quite appropriate to your majesty. Do you not know that you do good in secret always, that you hate flattery?"

"Ah! love has dictated these verses;

they are not meant for me! I require to open my heart—let us speak without disguise, I am resolved, whatever may be my private sentiments, never to fail in that respect which is due to the virtues of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, and to appear to remark in the conduct of the king only that which does not hurt and offend me."

"Ah! Madame, how much of real greatness of mind there is in these wise resolutions, for it appertains only to the indulgent and merciful to dissemble without being debased by it, and superior goodness can alone forgive with proper dignity!"

"Yes, I can render justice to Mademoiselle de la Fayette; you are not ignorant of it. Hatred itself cannot dare impeach her honour; she makes a truly meritorious use of the king's attachment; the king has performed many acts of justice and of clemency, and in defiance of the cardinal, he is become to me what France is desirous he should be.

Every species of gratitude is due to Mademoiselle de la Fayette; but still, can I be happy, and can she be without remorse, when the king has declared for her such sentiments? And can she mistake such testimonies of passion for simple friendship?"

"Yet it is most true, Madame, that the king has only spoken to her in the language of a friend."

"His are neither the tone, nor the expression, nor the look of simple friendship!"

"His conduct has been such. He has required nothing, not even those private interviews that the confidence of intimate friendship might ask! Their conversations have passed in the presence of witnesses, and beneath the observation of the most malevolent.—The king asks no more; under what pretence, therefore, can Mademoiselle de la Fayette break a bond so pure, and that with her sovereign, and where besides she sees the

utility of the counsels that she gives him?"

"However, if she find herself in danger, would not even religion sanction the triumph of such a preference?"

"She entertains for the king only a respectful attachment, which has nothing in common with love."

"*You* think this; *she* perhaps believes it: but she deceives herself; she passionately loves the king!"

"I can venture to assure your majesty, that she has only an attachment for virtue. If she knew the opinion of your majesty, I am convinced she would not hesitate to quit the court; but it will never be through me that she will learn it; for I am persuaded that her retreat at such a moment would be a serious misfortune. It would plunge the king into the deepest dejection; he would see in this rupture only levity, injustice, and ingratitude: this chagrin would weaken his good reso-

lutions, and re-establish the tottering power of the cardinal; and, lastly, it would have a fatal influence over all his sentiments. Your majesty will, I trust, condescend to excuse the sincerity of this declaration, reflecting only on the confidence with which I have at this moment been honoured, that consideration imposes on me the necessity of dissembling nothing."

At these words, the queen, as if displeased, replied with coldness and brevity, and pursuing the way to the ball-room, immediately entered it.

Madame de Beaumont, in making so candid an avowal, had wished to deprive the queen of the hope that this confidential dialogue would be repeated to Mademoiselle de la Fayette; for she had perfectly comprehended the secret intention of the queen, and that she was desirous of alarming the conscience of her friend.

Princes are so accustomed not only to be obeyed, but to have their wishes

divined and anticipated, that they instantly take offence at the slightest resistance, regarding it as a kind of rebellion.

The queen, for some days, treated Madame de Beaumont coldly, but at length her natural sweetness of disposition overcame this slight impulse of resentment, and the more readily, as, upon reflection she found much solidity of judgment in the reasons which influenced the marchioness to desire that Mademoiselle de la Fayette should remain at court.

Mademoiselle de Hautefort, really wishing to regain all her rights over the heart of the queen, resolved to have an explanation with this princess; and she confided her intention to her friend the Duchess of Chevreuse.

"I do not advise it," said the duchess.

"Wherefore not? I have nothing to reproach myself with in my conduct to the queen, and my attachment to her has been most constant and unshaken."

"Well, what do you wish to discover?

—Are you certain you have done nothing wrong?"

"Indeed I can defy her to cite a single blameable action!"

"So much the worse."

"Why?"

"Because you will then shew her she has, in your estimation, been capricious, ungrateful, unjust: you will wound her, you will confuse her; she will have nothing to say in her defence, she will at once marshal between herself and you all the barriers of superior rank: thrown in an instant to an enormous distance from her, sunk by a single look from the fragile elevation of the favourite, you will be compelled to assume another language; you will humbly resign instead of justifying yourself; and she who not long since in confidential intimacy treated you as an equal, and called you her friend, will coldly pronounce upon you an irrevocable sentence!"

Notwithstanding these prudent sug-

gestions, Mademoiselle de Hautefort, naturally haughty and opinionated, persisted; and one evening, when she was alone with the queen, as she was just retiring to bed, she entered upon this dangerous explanation in very cautious terms; but the queen, fatigued and disgusted by her malignity, and who waited only for a favourable opportunity to be rid of her, hastily closed the curtains, saying, "that she was weary of her arrogance, her reproaches, and her importunity; and that she wished to hear nothing more."

Mademoiselle de Hautefort was confounded, annihilated! All her pride forsook her; she threw herself on her knees beside the bed of the queen, calling Heaven to witness her innocence! She wept, sobbed, and groaned; but in vain: the queen was inflexible.

Mademoiselle de Hautefort in despair quitted the chamber, thinking herself cured of ambition and arrogance, because she bore the most violent resentment

against the queen. And it was not the first time that a disgraced or superseded courtier had taken resentment, rage, and ill-humour for a happy inclination towards philosophy!

The next day Mademoiselle de Hautefort received an order to quit the court. (9)

She was neither regretted nor worthy of being so. Her hatred of Mademoiselle de la Fayette had rendered her ridiculous and absurd in the general opinion, and she had, by its indulgence, become odious to the king: the queen had perceived this, and it was one of the causes of her disgrace.

A few months after, an important event made a great noise throughout Europe. The queen declared herself pregnant! The construction of the cardinal was equal to the surprise of the court, and the joy of all France. He had for some time observed the change which had been effected in the king. Louis himself distributed favours and rewards: he was

shut up every day for three hours in his cabinet, and he devoted himself to business of the state. Those letters of his to Mademoiselle de la Fayette, which the cardinal had read, had acquainted him that the counsels of Mademoiselle de la Fayette were as oracles with Louis; that she, with sovereign sway, disposed of his every action, even had led his inclinations, and that it was her desire to see him independently reign with glory; and to produce this effect, she laboured with energy and perseverance.

The re-union of the king and queen had been effected by her, it might be said, to sanctify this singular connexion; and if the queen gave to France an heir to its throne, this event would establish for ever the consideration and influence of Mademoiselle de la Fayette.

Struck with all these reflections, and trembling for his own authority, the cardinal at length saw, that to prevail against Mademoiselle de la Fayette, he must have recourse to all the inex-

haustible resources of his fertile imagination; and that neither known arts, nor common means, could be employed against her with a chance of success.

One morning, being shut up with Boisenval, the latter told him that the attachment of the king seemed every day to heighten.

"But," asked the cardinal, "do you not confound love with admiration and gratitude? Are you very certain that a sentiment so pure and tranquil at its commencement has actually become a violent passion?"

"Yes, my lord, it is now love itself; a passion which, like all other passions, agitates, tortures, and renders him unhappy. He esteems and admires Mademoiselle de la Fayette so warmly, that he endeavours to conceal it from her: but I do not think he is himself any longer deceived in his own sentiments, though he has not quite dismissed me. I have exerted every nerve to lower her in the estimation of both his reason and imagination; and I

have with address tried to lessen the merits of the object whom he idolizes! But all this is vain and futile; if she be not spoken of with enthusiasm, he will not listen; it really might be thought he did not even understand, but that he was spoken to in a foreign unknown tongue! Do not be deceived then, my lord; notwithstanding his weakness, his prudence, and his devotion, he loves with a *profane*. . . ."

The cardinal smiled as he said, "Yes, that may be true: friendship, heroic friendship, requires great strength of mind; but love needs not that. It is highly probable the king is very amorous."

"He is quite lost in love."

"And his conscientious scruples, what are become of them?"

"Father Caussin is so good a man! He is convinced, that if the king were conscious of this passion, he would reveal it to his confessor; but he is assured he will triumph over it: he asserts that he never has any conversation with Mademoiselle de la Fayette, but in the pre-

sence of witnesses; that she directs him only to good actions; that he would be nothing without her; that she has reconciled him to the queen; that she has bestowed great benefactions upon charitable institutions. . . ."

"*Upon convents* also; and that she urges him to dismiss me; but Father Caussin must learn and be convinced, that no circumstance or event can ever tolerate an adulterous passion."

"The king, from habit perhaps, still denominates his love as a simple friendship. In truth, whatever may happen, I do not think he will have resolution to pronounce the word *love*."

"Do not heed that; we shall convince Father Caussin, that an intimate friendship between a married man of thirty-five years, and a young and beautiful girl, has some danger: I wish at once to give him a short lesson."

"It is very right, my lord, that a head of the church should teach his duty to a simple monk. Besides, it is universally

known that your Eminence is as profound a divine, as you are a great politician."

"Attend, Boisenval; nothing that can be done, will have the effect of lessening the warmth of the king's attachment, or will now prejudice his mind against a female who has a perfect contempt of riches, and is destitute of ambition; who asks nothing for herself, nor even for her friends; who is free from coquetry, and whose conduct defies suspicion. It is necessary to change our measures. You must now devote yourself, on the contrary, to exalt her, to inflame the imagination of the king for her."

"For whom, my lord?"

"For Mademoiselle de la Fayette."

"Can your Eminence thus resolve? Can you seek to serve her who has sworn your ruin?"

"It is hers that I meditate; if you will second me, it is secured, and your fortune made; and such a fortune as you can form no idea of even from all I have already done for you."

"My attachment, my devotion, are yours to command!"

"I know it, Boisenval; and I speak to you this, not to encourage you, for you do not need it, but simply to acquaint you of the infinite value I attach to this service."

"Speak, my lord; what am I to undertake?"

"What I have already told you, to influence and embolden the king—but with great address, gradually, and insensibly to efface the ill you have already said of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, by declaring that you have conquered your prejudices against her, that she has gained your admiration, and then you will praise her to the greatest excess. To complete all, evince the most perfect confidence in her virtue, and in the integrity of the king, and by these means augment the self-presumption of the king."

"This will not be very difficult; the king believes he has had his honour put to the test."

" Has he shewn you the letters of Mademoiselle de la Fayette?"

" No, my lord; but when he is led to believe I am her admirer, I shall obtain every confidence; I am convinced of this."

" Then be assiduous in persuading him he is beloved as warmly as he himself loves."

" I shall not in that deceive him, for I do believe it."

" And I also; but she has great firmness of mind; she loves without weakness. Induce the king to ask private interviews, secret meetings, under the promise of inviolable respect, that all he requires of her is confidence in his honour and her own virtue. He will never induce her to take an improper step; she will refuse him, and they will consequently quarrel."

" I at once comprehend you: the idea is excellent! However mademoiselle loves, she is without experience in matters of this nature; she is a woman—and

suppose she was to suffer herself to be drawn on? If she should yield—"

"She will never pardon him; she will distance herself from the court to conceal her shame."

"It is necessary to provide against the possible; and if in this case love should at once lead her astray and retain her?"....

"The king, naturally chaste and religious, would imbibe honour from this frailty; he would no longer esteem her, he would even cease to love her: enthusiasm intoxicates him; if he should gain her, only disgust and remorse would be the result of the connexion: but I again repeat, Mademoiselle de la Fayette will make the sacrifice to her sense of duty."

"But resistance will augment the admiration of the king, and consequently her influence."

"No; the king, ashamed of his own weakness, will be less disposed to admire her; he will imagine himself less beloved, and from this idea he will love her less. Besides, if the king presume to

offer an imprudent and culpable proposal, Mademoiselle de la Fayette, convinced of the nature of his sentiments, will distance herself from him. The king will sigh, weep, and forget her."

"The chances are in favour of the result of this project; the plan is excellent, I will labour with ardour and dexterity; I will give your Eminence an account of my success, for I venture to predict it."

"Do not hurry, do not precipitate your measures, take ample time; the art of insinuation requires it. When that argument with which you seek to persuade, appears to fail, assume an air of indifference, and pursue it under another form. Remember that princes, the least informed, have yet always some general maxims instilled into their minds, which will not allow of their being sufficiently guided on certain occasions. For instance, they always know, that to gain them, their passions are flattered: there are some common-place observations derived from books which create some few

fears: avoid appearing the flatterer when you enter into the sentiments of the king: know to dissent without contradicting, and appear bold and independent as without risking any thing: appear austere in your general principles, and that the warmth of zeal carries you away only under particular circumstances. Princes scarcely believe the existence of friendship or sympathy; and what appears most singular, they are quite ready to confide in unreserved devotion. Accustomed from their earliest infancy to every homage, they often see in the sincere expressions of sensibility only servile language; they are perhaps too guarded against flattery, but they are not equally so against exaggeration; they appear to think that we should not venture to conceive an idea of imposing upon them to a great extent; they have the simplicity to suppose some bounds to actual falsehoods; besides, friendship demands a reciprocity that they are sensible cannot

exist with them. Devotion is an abandonment, a worship, an idolatry, which does not require an equal return; and this, doubtless, is because princes readily believe that they are adored; but they rarely flatter themselves they are beloved. I have unveiled to you, Boisenval, important secrets; you have address, intelligence, and you are yet young; therefore profit by them. Intimate acquaintance with a weak and mistrustful prince, whom we are anxious to govern, is an excellent school to form and perfect finesse of mind. To how much art, precaution, prudence, just observation, and suppleness, must we have recourse with them! It is absolutely necessary to conceal from the object the yoke under which he bows: princes will more readily pardon our exerting all our powers against them, than our presuming to have the appearance of knowing of that power; but when once an empire is fully established, then let the most audacious courage succeed to timid

measures, impudence then gives *eclât* to power, and no authority is real without grandeur."

It was thus in the recesses of his private cabinet, that Richelieu unveiled to his confidant his at once supple and domineering spirit, his ambitious and arrogant soul.

Boisenval minutely obeyed the orders of the cardinal; he raised the passion of the king yet higher, and in a few months he succeeded in gaining his entire confidence.

Louis always kept by Mademoiselle de la Fayette within the bounds of the strictest delicacy, suffered all the torments of the most painful constraint, and at length complained to Boisenval of the insupportable rack he endured in his interviews with her.

Boisenval replied, that he who exclusively possessed the heart of her he loves, and commanded her esteem, could with ease obtain his every wish, and that therefore Mademoiselle de la Fayette

would at last be brought to grant the king private interviews. The king, seduced by this language, consigned himself without further resistance to the indulgence of the sweetest expectations.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette was so deeply affected by the conduct, and, above all, by the tender affection of the king, that she at length believed the attachment she felt for him ought to supersede all that was due to herself. When it is the heart which calculatess on ingratitude, how immense does the debt appear!

Nevertheless Mademoiselle de la Fayette was not exempt either from affliction, nor from vague and confused inquietudes; each interview with the king appeared at once to heighten her happiness and augment her agitation. She had begun to embrace a high idea of the rectitude and honour of the king, so much so, that she found it impossible to take alarm at the sentiment he evinced for her: some months before, the expression of these

sentiments would have rendered her a thousand times more disturbed, but now her enthusiasm for him had arisen to that lofty extent of exaltation, it no longer permitted the indulgence of a fear! her sensibility had converted the king in her idea into a romantic and sublime hero; she loved him the more, because she thought she possessed the secret key to unlock his perfections; her heart and her imagination had deified him! but she feared herself, she knew not what name to give to that imperious and exclusive sentiment which occupied her every thought, and completely ruled it; she could no longer be blinded to the conviction that friendship was a weak name for such an attachment; but she was re-assured by reflecting it was impossible for any being fully acquainted with all the good qualities of the king, to feel for him any other than extraordinary sentiment. She at last became tranquillized, at least for some time, by dwelling on the prudence and the superior mind

of the king, and also upon the certain conviction that he expected nothing from her, and that he would never require any but the most innocent proofs of simple friendship.

However, the period of the queen's *accouchement* drew near, and the expectation of this important event engrossed the whole court. At last, upon the 5th of September, 1638, the wishes of France were gratified. The queen gave life at Saint Germain en Laye to an heir to the throne!

The birth of this prince, which [illegible] so long been ardently desir[illegible] whelmed the whole nation with [illegible] nation whose splendour and glory his reign was destined to augment in a future day. (10)

The queen received in her chamber only the king, her own ladies, and the princesses of the blood; but the unmarried princesses and the maids of honour were in an adjoining apartment.

As soon as the queen was brought to

bed, Mademoiselle de la Fayette followed the princesses and her companions into the chamber of the queen.—This princess (having. arrived at the most auspicious moment of her life) was yet in the arms of the king, whose countenance was bathed in tears as he pressed her to his bosom! Louis, wholly occupied with her and his infant, did not even perceive Mademoiselle de la Fayette; she did not obtain one look from those eyes suffused with tears, which, generally, had always sought her!....In this solemn moment, Louis was the husband and the father! Inaccessible to any other sensation, he entirely resigned himself to those emotions which the claims of nature inspired—even love was suspended in his heart!

This affecting sight made the most melancholy impression upon Mademoiselle de la Fayette; it seemed to her that she was then only a stranger in that chamber which she had entered with such lively joy!....She at last knew how much the sacred ties of husband and of father are

above all others; she suffered the greatest torment that a generous soul can sustain,—that of feeling herself capable of an unjust sentiment: she envied the queen; she was irritated against the king.

This emotion, so unworthy of her, could not remain in a heart like hers; but it left behind a cutting remorse, an inexpressible dejection, and the most melancholy train of reflections.

The queen, penetrated by the touching sensibility the king had evinced, was in a very different disposition of mind; she called Mademoiselle de la Fayette, and pressed her hand, saying—

"I am sure that you participate in my happiness!"

Mademoiselle de la Fayette turned pale; these words pierced her heart; she recalled what she had just felt.

The dauphin had been carried into a large apartment adjoining; and the king proposed to Mademoisesllе de la Fayette and many others to go and see him. He gave his arm to Mademoiselle de la

Fayette; he spoke a few sentences very low, they were replete with the most touching language that tender regard and gratitude for her counsels could dictate. He softened her, he fascinated her, and she remained only discontented with herself.

All the doors of the apartment were thrown open; and almost instantly a crowd of people rushed forward to gain admission into it; the hussars would have repulsed them, but the king cried out, " Let them enter:—this child appertains to the whole world*!"

These striking words, and perhaps the only popular ones which had ever issued from the lips of this prince, transported Mademoiselle de la Fayette! by an involuntary movement she tenderly pressed the arm of the king, who, surprized and overjoyed, in his turn regarded her with an impassioned look.

* Historical.

Confused as much as disturbed, she withdrew her arm; but she was soon diverted from this embarrassment by the universal enthusiasm which was manifested for the king! The few words he had just pronounced had gained him the hearts of all; with loud acclamations they thanked and applauded him; they wept, they offered up a thousand touching prayers for the young prince.

In the midst of this tumult, an old man of eighty years approached the cradle, and surveying the dauphin with eyes filled with tears, exclaimed, "Behold the hope of our children!——Oh! pledge of peace and prosperity!"—he continued lifting up his hands, "in the name of all fathers of families, and of all good citizens, I bless thee! Mayest thou live longer than I have lived! Mayest thou see all the enemies of our country humiliated, conquered; and the French nation wisely submissive and faithful to religion and their sovereign!" The action of this old man, his white locks, his

venerable figure, and his solemn tone, inspired the most lively sensations; he was a man of the lower class who spoke, but he was listened to with as much respect as emotion.

When the crowd was dispersed, the king took the dauphin in his arms, and carried him to the queen, that he might be put in her bed. All the ladies of the court entered the chamber of the queen; when the king, turning towards them, said, "I have been informed, that at my birth, the king, my father, embraced all the ladies whom he found in the chamber of the queen *; and it is a privilege," he added, smiling, "I do not wish to forfeit."

With these words he embraced the Marchioness of Senecé who was at his side, and making the round of the chamber, embraced successively all the ladies he passed.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette was near the door, and one of the last: all eyes

* Historical.

were riveted upon her; she wished not to appear embarrassed, but she was conscious the most vivid colour flushed her cheeks; as the king approached her, this colour heightened.

At last the king came exactly before her—not daring to lower her eyes, nor to turn them, she looked at him:—it was a look in which modesty and timidity were expressed with the most interesting sweetness, at the same time her countenance bore the impression of that degree of suffering which embarrassment always causes.

In this situation she appeared so lovely, that the king, indescribably struck, remained immoveable. He viewed her for a moment with ecstasy; then, without speaking, he gently took her hand, respectfully kissed it, and passed without embracing her.

What a distinction was this! to what a degree did it wound all the young people assembled in this circle! what a homage did love offer to modesty! and how

capable was Mademoiselle de la Fayette of supporting this delicacy!

It was midnight before they quitted the chamber of the queen; a great many persons went into an adjoining room, of which one of the windows was open, the heat being excessive: the king obtained a moment's conversation with Mademoiselle de la Fayette by leading her to this open window; when he said,

"You now know all my respect for you, and the influence that a single look of yours has over me. A brother, however, may embrace his sister,—and the sentiment that he feels would not be more pure than that you inspire in me: but your eyes told me I ought to submit... I confess also, that while contemplating the brilliance and freshness of those cheeks—that bland and lovely countenance, I thought that even the chastest kiss would have profaned them! and this sacrifice will at least obtain from you an unreserved confidence!"

"Ah!" replied Mademoiselle de la

Fayette, have you not long possessed my exclusive and boundless confidence? I could defy myself; but you, sire, oh! ever...."

"How happy you render me," cried the king: "believe me, I could now lose nothing of your good opinion of my sentiments without becoming the most unfortunate of men! I know your sentiments for me, but it is impossible to describe mine for you: for how can we give an idea of that which is boundless and immeasurable? You exist independently of me; you have your individual characteristics, your particular taste, your own opinions—but I, ah! I am nothing but through you and for you! I have not one idea which does not appertain to you, not a sentiment which does not spring from you; it is your mind which enlightens me, it is your soul which animates me; I derive an inexpressible charm from the thought that all my meritorious actions proceed from your heart! Ah! I no longer fear flattery: others may ap-

prove, it is only you who praise me. Resign yourself then to me without apprehension and without mistrust; it is to rest on virtue, it is to confide in yourself!"

There was in this discourse as much art as passion, Louis was anxious to prepare Mademoiselle for the strangest proposal: drawn on, seduced by love, and encouraged by the subtle advice of Boisenval, this prince had conceived a hope the most rash; or rather it might be said, certain of being beloved, he did not doubt success in the request he was about to make.

Nevertheless he still hesitated for some time: but, five days after the *accouchement* of the queen, always stimulated by Boisenval, and taking decidedly his resolution, he no longer deferred the execution of his design. One morning in the apartment of the queen, Louis, at the end of one of his usual conversations with Mademoiselle de la Fayette, told her that he had a favour to ask of her.

"I am rejoiced at it," she replied, "but

how is it possible I have not been able to divine any thing dependent upon myself which could afford you pleasure?"

"It depends entirely upon yourself; you promise me, then, to grant it? Is there any necessity to promise it? give me your word."

"I give it from the bottom of my soul. Speak, sire."

"No, it would require too long an explanation; I will acquaint you with it by writing; you will receive a letter this evening—but remember your word that you have just pledged, and reflect, that if you fail, you will plunge me into the most violent despair."

Saying this, the king rose and quitted her. Mademoiselle de la Fayette remained astonished, but without inquietude: the idea that the king could ask any thing unbecoming, did not for a moment enter her imagination; but she was very curious to know the secret; her mind was full of conjectures about it—conjectures which had no connection with the truth. At last, in the evening, she found

a letter at her house from the king; she hastily opened it, and read its contents with the most sorrowful surprise.

"If we had for each other only a common friendship, and if you did not perfectly know my heart, the proposal I am about to make might appear imprudent and ill-advised; but you know that it is impossible you could be guilty of *imprudence* with me, and to an attachment like mine you ought to resign yourself with the blindest confidence.

"What have I said? your confidence cannot be that in me; you cannot be ignorant of the purity, the delicacy of my attachment, and your supreme influence over me; you cannot be ignorant that when you have wished to repress an involuntary declaration, a single look from you has sufficed. For two years, during which I have exclusively loved you, I have never been able to speak to you without witnesses, except twice; and even then I owed that invaluable happiness

to chance. It is quite impossible for me to support this odious restraint much longer. I have made arrangements at my hunting-lodge, at Versailles, to render it according to your taste; you will find there flowers, a garden, a meadow, and a wood; come then and embellish this asylum, and render it the temple of friendship. (11)

"You can bring hither those individuals of your society whom you love the most, and you will pass thus three or four days every week; there we may converse without witnesses, and you will at once complete my gratitude and my happiness! What would you fear?—Calumny? she will not dare to attack you, she cannot attaint you. Lastly, I claim your word, because I am certain that you will confide in my principles, and my honour. Reflect that your refusal would be an outrage that would wring my soul and destroy all my happiness!"

After having read this letter, Mademoiselle de la Fayette remained as if

annihilated! the fatal bandage, which for such a length of time had veiled her view of truth, fell at once from her eyes! —no more illusion remained, no more possibility of self-deception on that sentiment which had dictated this letter; it was written by a lover who thought and expressed himself as such, and a lover so seduced by passion that he had lost every idea of decency.

To complete her grief, Mademoiselle de la Fayette could not but acknowledge, in the recesses of her own heart, a culpable reciprocrity of this fatal passion.

"Just Heaven!" she exclaimed, "with what a tone of assurance and of authority he proposes my dishonour! What reputation would not be sullied by such conduct? What! at my age, for me to establish myself in that house, to meet the king *tête-à-tête!* Behold then this attachment that I believed so pure! What, shall I authorize an adulterous love?—Unhappy wretch, I partake it! Ah, I only wished to deceive myself!—

When I recall so many passionate interviews, it is scarcely possible to believe I ever could have been self-deceived. But what can I say in reply? Oh, desolating thought! I am about to incense and to reduce him to despair." This idea completely overthrew all Mademoiselle de la Fayette's fortitude, all her courage failed, and love ruled despotic. Irrevocably resolved to act in no respect unworthy of herself, she at least wished for the means, if it were possible, of softening the dreadful blow with which she must assail the king.

She shuddered on re-perusing the last sentence of the letter—

"Reflect, that a refusal would be an outrage that would wring my soul, and destroy all my happiness!"

"My attachment," she said, "has then served only to cause his misery.—Ah! I could, without effort, sacrifice my repose, my happiness, my life to him; but my reputation and his, my honour!—To foster an adulterous passion, and to be-

come an open scandal to France, to play the ignominious part of a declared mistress—to have at least every appearance of it; to become an object of the most deserved contempt!—And it is *he* who has proposed such a debasement!—Ah! doubtless he would always be with me delicate and respectful; he at least thinks he is so; but when love can thus sufficiently lead him astray, to annihilate every idea of delicacy, and all apprehension of public condemnation, so well founded; how can such resolutions and such promises be relied on? And if he were honourable, who would believe it? There is indeed but too much cause to break so criminal a connection, when I am at length become sensible of his sentiments and my own!

"In what security I have slept on the brink of an abyss! with what delight I have contemplated the future, coloured by fancy, and now covered with a veil so dark and sad! Prospects so dear to my heart, you are then only chimeras!—I

will resign myself to my melancholy fate, I will weep, I will suffer even till I sink into the grave ! Ah, of what consequence, if I could be assured of his happy destiny.

" But the king, what will become of him ? Into what dejection, into what sombre melancholy will my departure plunge him ? he will accuse me of cruelty, of ingratitude, while I shall die overwhelmed with misery ! he will complain of me, he will mourn a friendship the admiration of his people, even glory : yes, if he would fulfil his right destiny, if the French would do justice to his great qualities, I would support his absence with courage, and even the loss of his affection. But how can I renounce the hope that I had conceived, those projects which I have embosomed ? how can I sustain the desponding idea that he will sink into indolence, that he will remain under the yoke of an insolent minister, and that history will never record him among her great monarchs ?—Each re-

flection increases the terrific bitterness of my regrets; I have no thought which is divested of melancholy. Unfortunate prince!" she continued, shedding a torrent of tears; "Oh! thou whom I have loved, whom I have always regretted—Alas! you will preserve of me only an embittered remembrance, and perhaps a hateful one. Our hearts will then cease to understand each other, they will not longer mutually respond!—Ah! if thou couldest but know to what excess I love thee!—Ah! why, in for ever quitting thee, can I not indulge this only consolation? But can I hope to assuage thy ills in avowing the grief which destroys me? The pity alone which it must inspire, would overwhelm thee! No, no, I love better to see thee unjust than to aggravate thy pangs!"

Mademoiselle de la Fayette passed the whole night in this dreadful state, resolved to fly, to quit all; but not knowing, and being unable to determine on what method to embrace to announce

her resolution to the king. Madame de Beaumont was at Paris : besides, Mademoiselle de la Fayette, though she felt for her the tenderest friendship. could not avoid discovering that the marchioness had always judged with too much lenity of her connexion with the king.

A great soul will never be precipitated by too much indulgence into vice; but yet it may have its most generous resolutions weakened, or at least retarded by it.

If Mademoiselle de la Fayette, at this period, had received on this subject the advice of a man, courageous, and a more sincere friend, she would at once have quitted the court; she would not have resisted her early scruples, nor been deaf to the voice of honour, which had so often conjured her to break off this seducing and dangerous connexion!

Her determination was taken; it was to bury herself for ever in the midst of an estate a hundred leagues from Paris : there was nothing more to be resolved,

but how she ought to conduct herself to prepare the king for this event, to ask permission of retreat from the queen, and to announce it to the court. She had indeed need of advice; and at the moment not knowing whom to address, she resolved to pour all her mortal chagrins into the bosom of the virtuous Vincent de Paul. She knew that he had been for some days the superintendant guardian in the hospital established near Longchamps. She resolved to go there without delay. Having ordered a carriage and horses to be ready for her at St. Germain, she set out before the dawning of day. She experienced inexpressible anguish in passing through the town, and finding herself distant from the chateau. The profound obscurity of the night did not permit her to gain a last view of this edifice which she was probably never more to see!

If the pious Vincent advised her not to return to court, and to suppress unneces-

sary adieus, she was resolved to obey him! Thus perhaps she fled, no more to return ... This thought, the darkness which surrounded her, and the noise made by the wheels of the carriage, painting to her imagination the rapidity of her movements, all united, on this dreadful night, to cause her as much agitation as grief!

"Alas!" she exclaimed, "at this moment, a prince so worthy of being beloved, resigns himself in fond security to the sweets of sleep! He sleeps, and I am flying from him: he slumbers, confiding in me, in my tenderness, and my devotion, and I abandon him for ever! When he awakes, he will enquire for my answer, and what answer will he receive! That cruel letter will reveal to him that I eternally renounce him, that I will never again behold him! This terrible letter will be written by my own hand. Oh! how is it possible to support such affliction and live?" The head of the poor unfortunate fell on her shoulder as she was

thus speaking—sobs stifled her voice—she remained motionless, sunk in the abyss of deep despair!

Day glimmered as Mademoiselle de la Fayette perceived the steeples of the convent of Longchamps. The most touching remembrances recurred to imagination. She recalled that storm, during which Louis had with strong emotion borne her on, pressing her with transport to his breast! She recalled the long conversation she had held with him in the convent, her oppressed heart was writhed! At that moment she even felt an irresistible desire to enter into the convent.

She descended from the carriage, and leaving her attendants at the outer door which was thrown open, she entered the church. She found in it only a sexton, light ing the wax-tapers of an altar, in which high mass was to be performed. The lamp of night suspended at the arch of the choir, was not yet extinct. Mademoiselle de la Fayette slowly advanced. Every thing brought to memory that memorable morn-

ing when her heart had been so deeply agitated; it seemed to her as if Louis was at her side, as if she heard his footsteps. Soon she reached that tomb where she had so fervently prayed! She stopped, then sunk upon her knees, and crossing her hands upon her breast, the striking memorials of the past made her shudder!

"No," she said, "it was not accident which caused that sacred veil to fall from his trembling hand, and rest on my head!"

After these words, she remained a moment buried in profound reflection. At last she exclaimed, "Oh infinite goodness! O my God, thou inspirest me!—I can keep my promise to grant him some solitary meetings. I can again behold him, I ca‹ receive him with propriety, and fearless of danger; it is only to sacrifice myself, Heaven be blessed! It shall be done. Great God! receive an irrevocable oath!"........

Having pronounced these words, she rose, filled with confidence and resolution: she then advanced before the

altar, when mass was about to commence; and, after joining in it, she summoned her attendants, re-ascended the carriage, and immediately proceeded to the hospital, where she expected to find Saint Vincent; but she was then informed he had returned to Paris, and, without loss of time, she also took the same route.

She meditated the greatest of sacrifices; but she felt at that moment a supreme joy in the thought that she could again behold the king, and give him useful counsel.

She was going to promise her God solemnly to renounce the world, to surrender up her liberty, and become a *religieuse* in the convent where she was brought up.

During the journey to Paris, Mademoiselle de la Fayette had time to combine and arrange all the particulars of her plan. Friendship was not forgotten. As Mademoiselle de la Fayette had only distant relations and some collateral branches of her family, with whom she was unacquainted, she resolved to give her whole fortune to Madame de Beau-

mont, and to arrange her marriage with St. Ibal. On arriving at Paris, she saw Vincent de Paul, who approved her resolutions, her intentions, her sacrifice; and who was commissioned to take the necessary steps to hasten the execution of it, which he fixed himself should take place in eight days. Mademoiselle de la Fayette required from him the greatest secrecy, and even towards Madame de Beaumont. When every thing was arranged, she wrote a letter to the king, containing these words :—

"Your Majesty requires that our interviews should no longer pass beneath the observation of witnesses. Before knowing what was the nature of that which you required of me, I had promised to grant it; I shall keep my word —but I venture to entreat of you, sire, that you would permit me to select the spot for these private interviews. In eight days the asylum which must receive us will be prepared, and I will be there.

You will then know the full extent of my attachment and my boundless devotion!"

She had this letter taken to Saint Germain, and at the same time she secretly sent a courier to to the Count de Soissons, to beg him to come and meet her at Paris, having something of importance to communicate to him.

Though she had no particular connexion with the Count de Soissons, she had had the opportunity of rendering him many essential services through the king. She knew from Saint Ibal, that the Count was deeply affected by them, and that he was greatly attached to her. He hastened to her immediately, and Mademoiselle de la Fayette, after having made him promise inviolable secrecy, confided to him her immoveable resolution. He well knew it was useless to combat it; but he could not restrain his tears in reflecting that a woman so young and lovely, and of such superior merit, should bury herself for

ever in a cloister. Unwilling to reveal the weakness of Louis, she simply said, that disgusted with the court and with the world, she wished eternally to separate from them.

She begged him without delay to speak to the Count de Melcy, the father of Saint Ibal, and inform him, that by a particular donation, Madame de Beaumont had acquired an estate, rented at thirty thousand livres, a house at Paris, and a country mansion. Mademoiselle de la Fayette sold her jewels and her plate to endow with them some hospitals and her own convent; the Count de Soissons engaged to defray the expenses of the wedding: it was necessary that the marriage of the marchioness should take place at Vincennes, in the country seat of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, the eve of the day that she was to take the veil. The count undertook to arrange all that was indispensably necessary; and it was expedient that the prince, having the consent of the Count de Melcy,

should inform Saint Ibal of this event, carefully concealing from him the donation of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, which was not to be revealed until the day subsequent to the marriage. The count, impressed with the deepest grief and strongest admiration of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, quitted her only to perform all she had desired and confided to his care.

Secrecy was indispensable for many reasons, but more particularly it was wished by Mademoiselle de la Fayette, to spare her those afflicting scenes which might have staggered her resolution, the opposition of the king, the regrets, the arguments, and the tears of Madame de Beaumont!

When all was arranged and settled, Mademoiselle de la Fayette, on being left to herself, felt an emotion of terror; she feared to reflect upon the sacrifice that she was to consummate in eight days, and that she had till now only contemplated under the influence of that sin-

gle idea, the thought of again beholding the king.

"Alas!" said she, "it is not a pious vocation which leads me to the holy asylum; it is a profane sentiment which impels me thither! But at least my life is innocent, and my heart is pure. Religion will calm the cruel agitation of this too vulnerable heart, and it is that which will gather the fruits of a sacrifice that I make to friendship.—It is done;—the engagement is irrevocable! without reflection, and in the short space of a few hours I have sealed my fate! And what destiny have I chosen! At twenty-five years of age to renounce the whole world, to bury myself eternally in a cell . . . To submit myself to an absolute perpetual dependence, and to continual austerities!"

To desire nothing further of the world than to be forgotten long before death, and in the bloom of youth to live concealed in a profound eternal obscurity! Each of these ideas heightened the throbbing of her heart and arteries, secret terrors seized

her imagination. Shocked at her own thoughts, she repulsed them with horror, and casting herself upon her knees, cried out—

"O my God! I acknowledge that human motives, however generous they may be, cannot be sufficient in the greatest sacrifices to shield us from corroding regrets. Sanctify then, Oh God! my resolutions, that religion may be my aim, that faith may sustain it, and that piety may become its recompense!" As she pronounced this prayer, she heard the voice of Madame de Beaumont, and rising precipitately, she wiped the tears from her weeping eyes, and, less agitated, returned to her seat. She had sufficient resolution to conceal her grief, her painful secret, and to converse even tranquilly with the marchioness. The latter remarked some alteration in her countenance, but as she was accustomed to see her often plunged in melancholy, she was not alarmed by it.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette, who wished to take leave of the queen, had

resolved to return to court, the day before the eve of her sacrifice. She said, that business would detain her some days at Paris; the marchioness determined to attend her, and even to repair with her to Saint Germain: the two friends continued together the remainder of the day. Mademoiselle de la Fayette, notwithstanding the constraint she imposed upon herself, was sensible of a degree of pleasure and of gratification she had never before felt. She dwelt on the idea, that she was on the point of securing to her the happiest fate; this sweet idea was for her a soothing consolation.

The successive days Mademoiselle de la Fayette received many letters from the king, and their contents were calculated to wound her heart! He thanked her in the most passionate terms for the *tête-à-tête* interviews she had promised him, and these letters were bedewed with the bitterest tears.

However, Mademoiselle de la Fayette went to the convent of the daughters of

Saint Mary, in the suburbs of Saint Anthony, secretly to see the prioress; on the other hand, the Count de Soissons went to inform Mademoiselle de la Fayette that he had obtained the consent of the father of Saint Ibal, that the latter was acquainted with it and intoxicated with joy.

"It was expedient," continued the prince, "to tell the exact truth to Count de Melcy under the seal of profound secrecy. I have shewn him the donation in proper form, that you have had drawn up. Self-interest will secure you his discretion; besides, this marriage constitutes the happiness and the good fortune of his son, without dispossessing him of any thing himself during life. I undertake all the arrangement of the nuptials; besides he will not be even present, for he has the gout and keeps his bed.

"When I acquainted Saint Ibal, that I had arranged with his father that he should receive thirty thousand livres annually, he concluded that his father had

made this offering; he has been very much disturbed at one fancied obstacle that Madame de Beaumont opposed to him, but it has been explained away; they are agreed, and no idea can be formed of the transports of their joy; they wish to hasten to implore you to be present at the important event; and for myself," added the count, "I think only of their heroic benefactress, I can see but you alone, and I can only sigh!"

In fact, Madame de Beaumont and Saint Ibal did come, and recounted to Mademoiselle de la Fayette all that, of which she was so much better informed than themselves.

The marchioness said in secret to her friend, that she was certain that it was herself who had engaged the Count de Soissons to conduct this affair with such lively interest; that she did not doubt the prince, though he did not wish it to be known, had conceived the generosity of giving to Saint Ibal the greater part of the fortune secured to him, without

which the Count de Melcy would never have granted his consent. Mademoiselle de la Fayette indulged this idea, and asked only for the marriage to be celebrated at Vincennes at her country house, which was granted with pleasure.

Two days previous to the nuptials of Madame de Beaumont, Mademoiselle de la Fayette set out for Saint Germain with her and Saint-Ibal, as had been agreed upon. It was only in the morning Mademoiselle de la Fayette wished to avoid conversation with the king; for these interviews were always longer and more intimate than those of the evening. During the journey the marchioness and Saint Ibal were so exclusively engrossed with each other, that they never remarked either the abstraction or the sombre melancholy of their unhappy friend.

Arrived at Saint Germain, the two lovers conducted Mademoiselle de la Fayette into her apartment, where she arranged her dress, in order to appear in the circle of the queen.

Upon entering her chamber, Mademoiselle de la Fayette saw with surprise a beautiful dress decorated with flowers; it was a little attention of Madame de Beaumont to greet her arrival.

"Your two years of mourning," she said, "were finished while we were at Paris: and I shall have the gratification of seeing you appear in the circle of the queen this evening in a coloured garb. I wish to dress you myself, it is an art that you must have forgotten, I charge myself with the office."

Mademoiselle de la Fayette embraced her friend; she smiled, but her eyes were full of tears, they were instantly engaged at the toilette; she made no resistance.

Grace and beauty are valued at so high a price, that women the least frivolous are not free from a secret impulse of vanity on this point.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette (without being conscious of it) was not in reality sorry to appear at court for the last time with every advantage. To her dress were

added all those jewels bequeathed her by her aunt, which she had never before worn; when her toilette was completed, the Marchioness rallied her on the melancholy cast of her countenance, which she attributed to the weariness her long toilette had produced.

"It almost appears to me as if I were decking a victim!" she added, laughing.

At this speech, Mademoiselle de la Fayette could not restrain a heavy sigh which issued from the bottom of her heart!

"Come," continued the marchioness, "come, and be enlivened and animated by viewing yourself."

Saying this, she led her before a glass—soon she cast down her eyes, and turned aside her head to conceal the tears which coursed down her cheeks. Madame de Beaumont dressed herself hastily; at last she drew her friend into the queen's circle. Mademoiselle de la Fayette, for the first time seen in a brilliant dress, excited all that astonishment and admiration which

is created by a new beauty; she was just about retiring when she saw the king appear; she turned pale, but when he approached, her colour deepened in her cheeks. The king could not restrain a start of surprise upon perceiving this celestial figure so equally dazzling as regularly and perfectly beautiful! He felt in this moment so lively and so passionate a sentiment, that fearing entirely to betray himself, he merely asked her, in a very low voice, where was the spot of rendezvous on the day after the morrow, and what hour she would name?

She replied, that he would be informed by a note the same evening, just before he retired to bed. The king thanked her with a look and an expression of joy which made her shudder!

In that moment it seemed to her that she deceived him, that she betrayed him: an inexpressible pulsation of the heart deprived her of almost all her resolution.

They conversed in the apartment only of her beauty. The king, who was cau-

tious in speaking of it, caught the eyes of the Count de Soissons; he perceived him retired on one side to the embrasure of a window; he approached him, but he had scarcely pronounced the name of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, when the count covered his eyes with both his hands, and melted into tears!

The king was affected, and he pitied him with the secret pride of a preferred lover. This unfortunate prince was very far from foreseeing, that even the attachment which he had inspired was to be evinced by so extraordinary a devotion, as to consecrate to him the miserable remnant of her life!

The king, too much agitated to tarry long in the apartment, retired at an early hour. Mademoiselle de la Fayette was obliged to remain as usual, even to the moment when the queen retired to her chamber to sleep. After the queen had finished playing, according to custom, she remained in her cabinet with those persons who formed her particular society.

The cabinet fitted up with glass and gilding, was decorated with as much refined taste as magnificence: it was then that, at the moment, almost forgetting etiquette and laying aside state, the queen resigned herself to the fascination of conversation with the most pleasing and charming persons of her court.

The evening was torturing to Mademoiselle de la Fayette—all that she beheld, all that she heard, was to her a subject of regret and of pain.

The elegance of this apartment, all the *chefs-d'œuvre* of the arts, she admired for the last time; she was hereafter to view only sombre dormitories, she was henceforth only to dwell in a cell!

The most death-like silence, or conversation the most insipid to her who had a taste for all those charms connected with the pleasures of genius, would succeed to those animated conversations so full of the agreeable and the delicate.

These thoughts successively and rapidly heightened that sad affliction which her

sentiments for the king created; they plunged her into a dejection it was impossible to dissemble, and which struck every one; she pleaded a violent headache as an apology for it. The queen at last retired to her chamber, when Mademoiselle de la Fayette requested a moment's audience, which was at once granted to her. When they were alone, Mademoiselle de la Fayette, after having begged the pledge of her royal word to keep that a secret for forty-eight hours, which she was then anxious to reveal, confessed that she was to take the veil the day after the next.

The commiseration of the queen equalled her surprise. Mademoiselle de la Fayette did not speak of the letter of the king, she therefore believed she only sacrificed herself from a sense of the danger of her own attachment! The queen, without being able to utter a word, embraced her with the tenderest expression, she held her a long time pressed within her arms,

it was at once a testimony of admiration and of gratitude.

Yet the queen thought she ought to offer all the arguments that could be suggested on the sudden step she was about to take, and perhaps also she dwelt on them the more, as she saw from the first word that all remonstrance would be futile. The interview was tender and affecting; the queen, in ceasing to envy this interesting person, beheld in her only the most generous friend of Louis; she conjured her, and with sincerity, often to see the king at the grate, that she might continue to impress him with those counsels which had heretofore been of such utility; she promised also herself to visit her.

This conversation revived the courage of Mademoiselle de la Fayette: nothing so much soothes a dejected soul as the suffrage and marks of esteem from those who are revered.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette was to sleep at Vincennes with Madame de

Beaumont; she went into her chamber only to write two lines to the king: she promised him an interview on the day after the morrow at noon in one of the parlours of the convent of the daughters of Saint Mary, in the suburbs of Saint Anthony; a convent which he knew, according to the custom of the times, was often used as a retreat. The king was surprised and afflicted; the austerity of the place, and the idea that in these *tête-à-têtes* a double grate would separate him from Mademoiselle de la Fayette, caused in him real mortification and distress; but he admired the ingenious delicacy of her who had discovered these means of meeting him without any ground for scandal. He surmised nothing more, he had no suspicion of the sacrifice that Mademoiselle de la Fayette was about to offer. He should enjoy happiness for a while from conversations without constraint, and he flattered himself that in time he should obtain more.

However Mademoiselle de la Fayette

set out for Vincennes at two hours after midnight.

Terrible was her affliction upon finding herself in that house which was so dear to her, and where she had collected so many touching memorials!—How many tears she shed in this cabinet filled with pictures which represented only the king!

"Dear prince," she said, "nothing in my solitude will ever bring thee before my view but I shall carry thy image in the recesses of my heart, and severe duty will never be able to efface it for a moment! Oh! if, at least, before I quit thee, I could be permitted to describe all I feel.—But I renounce thee, and thou shalt never know to what extent thou art beloved!— I ought for the future even to suppress with thee the expression of a tender friendship!

"Ah! how can I assume this austere language? How can I again see thee, listen to thee, reply to thee, with a calm countenance and with a tranquil tone!"

While making these cruel reflections,

she shed a deluge of tears.—Suddenly she recollected that she had yet another sacrifice to offer; it was that of the letters of the king! she took a candle, and lighted the fire, and her heart seemed to break as she beheld them burn! It appeared to her that with these cherished letters every chimera of happiness was annihilated! Seated motionless before this flaming heap, she contemplated it with maddening emotion!—After a long silence, she exclaimed—

"Thus then so many touching professions, so many vows of eternal tenderness, produce but a passing and rapid flame, and evaporate in smoke! There are only the ashes of them remaining. —Such are the sweetest illusions of life!"

Mademoiselle de la Fayette, absorbed in affliction, remained in this room until the dawn; when she went into her chamber, and threw herself upon the bed, but without any hope of enjoying a moment's sleep. She removed the beautiful covering of embroidered silver

which lay over the wooden stool of the king, on which he had sat as he rocked the little twins of the cottage. The rusticity of this piece of furniture allowed of her carrying it with her, it was a consolation to think that she could place in her cell that which was pregnant with such sweet remembrance! She placed on this seat the little crucifix lapis lazuli, left her by the Countess de Brégi, and she said—

"Behold all my riches! It is on this seat I shall every day sit in silent meditation! And this crucifix destined to receive the last prayers of sensitive and suffering hearts will rest upon my bosom even to my last moments! I will invoke the Supreme Power for me—for the king—and for France!"

At nine o'clock in the morning Mademoiselle de la Fayette, rallying all her courage, wished upon this day to be entirely engaged with the happiness of her friend. At ten o'clock the Count de Soissons arrived with Saint Ibal: the

count knowing that Mademoiselle de la Fayette destined her diamonds to some works of charity, brought to her a box containing some valuable jewels and some superb stones, and he offered it to Madame de Beaumont.

At noon the two lovers were united in the chapel of the house; only twelve persons were invited. Mademoiselle de la Fayette, throwing aside every consideration of self, appeared calm; she entered with grace into the general gaiety, and performed the honours of the house with all that charm of manner so natural to her: nevertheless, notwithstanding the consolation she found in the happiness of creating the felicity of her friend, yet this captivating picture of a happy and legitimate love, pierced her soul with grief!

She mentally said, "Shall they be partakers of all the happiness that can be tasted on earth? as for myself, I shall only know the torture of an acute and profound sensibility!"

In the evening, all the nuptial party assembled round a table at play, with the exception of Count de Soissons and of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, who retired to a terrace at the side of the apartment. The count, who had not been able to surmount the grief with which he was overwhelmed, experienced a sweet though melancholy gratification in mingling his tears with hers, and expressing to her his admiration!

"I think with terror of the morrow!" he said to her; "of that dreadful day in which you will at once abandon, never to return thither, that court, and that world, of which you are the loveliest ornament! I shall however take an opportunity, after your departure, of declaring to Saint Ibal and your friend all that they owe you! I shall enjoy their gratitude, and even have a gratification in their grief: I shall undertake to deliver an eulogium worthy of you, and I shall see your sublime virtue admired as highly as it merits."

If even frivolous eulogiums are not quite indifferent, what impression might be produced by such praises as are deserved? Pride had never been attached to Mademoiselle de la Fayette; it was thought that no person well born, and in her situation, would have conducted herself with so little, but yet she felt fortified by the idea that a true friend would display her virtues, which henceforth must consist in that fortitude which is the result of sincere piety.

When all the party in the house had retired, Mademoiselle de la Fayette wrote to her friend a long letter as touching as explicit, which she left at Vincennes with orders not to deliver it before noon the next day. At last she set out, purposing to sleep at Paris.

The following morning, as soon as day dawned, she repaired to her convent; she had been expected, and all was in readiness for her reception.

She had passed a part of the night at prayers; her heart suffered, but the ele-

vation of her ideas had entirely banished from her imagination every secret inclination towards the world and its vain delights, and had wholly effaced frivolous regrets. She was softened, but not dejected. It was not the last retreat of criminal disgraceful love, it was not repentance which had led her into this holy asylum: irreproachable and pure, she felt all the dignity of her sacrifice, and at this solemn moment the enthusiasm of virtue freed her lofty soul from the agitations of unhappy passion!

This sweet calm became yet more perfect when she had received the veil and the sacred fillet; she thought herself transformed! Each heavenly gift began to descend into this soul, so deserving to receive and to taste them! A delightful peace banished trouble and inquietude for ever; fixed in a state of the highest perfection, she found herself tranquil and free; she was astonished that this sacrifice had not been the free choice of her own inclination, and far from think-

ing that she was devoted by renouncing all the dangerous illusions of the world, it seemed as if she came to disengage herself from the most troublesome shackles and heaviest fetters! As she contemplated the past, she saw a stormy sea, pregnant with rocks almost inevitably destructive, and she anticipated with joy in future only a sure and peaceable road, terminated by a perspective brilliant in light, in glory, and in happiness!

At noon the king arrived, having still no suspicion of his misfortune. Mademoiselle de la Fayette, being informed of it, repaired to the parlour. At the sight of this celestial figure, clad in a robe of coarse black cloth, and whose fascinating countenance was covered with a long white veil, the king remained terrified, his eyes riveted upon her!

"Forgive me," she said to him in a calm tone, full of sweetness, "for having thus disposed of myself without your knowledge.—Sire, too much sensibility was leading us into a dangerous path;

the letter, in which your majesty, for the first time in your life, forgetting all the laws of propriety, proposed to establish me at Versailles—this fatal letter cleared my blinded vision! I had promised to grant your request, I could only maintain my word by enclosing myself within a cloister; I have this morning taken the veil; and that irrevocable vow, which will be publicly pronounced in one year, is already registered in my heart!"

"Heavens!" exclaimed Louis, "is it a vision, is it an angel who appears to me?"

"It is a friend," she replied, "who consecrates herself to pray for France and for you! To invoke the Deity to enable her to hold only religious conversation with you, to remind you of your duties, or to preserve an eternal silence; to lend attention only to the praises of God, or to listen to you, to see only you, or the holy virgins consecrated to the Lord; to forget all vain worldly pleasures, and all frivolous objects, to be

engrossed only by religion and you; such is my vocation! Ah! is it not a noble destiny?"

"But," cried the king, in a voice interrupted by sobs, "these fatal grates which will separate us for ever!"....

"No; the tomb itself could not separate us: it is in elevation, in refinement, that our souls can be completely united."

At these words, the king in tears fell upon his knees—"Oh! you," he said, "sole object of all the affections of this lacerated heart! you whom I in secret would adore! at your feet I abjure that profane sentiment which, notwithstanding every effort, and so long a time unknown to me, seduced my reason!—The heroism of your virtue has triumphed over love itself. I no longer see in you aught but a celestial object! Yes, this sweet look, this angelical expression, under the religious veil, could henceforth only cause grief and agitation to a vicious or depraved heart: it is sufficient to gaze on you, to adore innocence! But what

shall I become in that court where you will be no more? I can only find consolation in imitating you, in regulating my life by yours, in retiring for ever to the profound solitude of a cloister." (12)

"What do you say? Oh Heaven!" interrupted Mademoiselle de la Fayette, "you who are a king, a father, a spouse, and you would wish to bury yourself in a monastery.—Ah! sire, what is in me a noble sacrifice, in you would be only a shameful desertion! Reflect that I could save my reputation and tranquillize my conscience by going into retirement for some years, but I wished to preserve for you a friend, whose counsels you consider useful, and therefore have I renounced the world and my liberty. Your glory is the only happiness which remains for me, that alone can recompense such a devotion!"

"Alas!" replied the king, "you have acquired the right to dispose of my fate, but at least refrain from believing it ever can be happy."

"No," cried Mademoiselle de la Fayette, "no; the happiness of a sovereign cannot depend on an individual affection; such great destiny should be attached only to the public welfare. Sire, France will become itself—you will vanquish all your enemies, and, after some triumphs, worthy of immortalizing the supreme chief of this generous nation, you will conclude by reaching the zenith of your own glory, in securing to your subjects the sweetest recompense of their devotion, the noblest reward of your labours—an honourable and permanent peace!"

NOTES.

NOTE (1), *page* 6.

LOUIS de Nogaret de la Vallette was at first Abbé of Saint Victor, afterwards Archbishop of Toulouse, then Cardinal; but even this dignity could not abate his martial inclinations. The Cardinal Richelieu deputed him to fill the first situation in war, the government of Anjou, and that of Metz; he appointed him to command in Germany with the Duke of Weimar, afterwards in Franche Comté, in Picardy, and in Italy: he died in arms, at Rivoli, near Turin, at the age of forty-seven It was in vain the Pope (Urban VIII.) had menaced him with a deprivation of the cardinalship, if he continued to bear arms; nothing could induce him to renounce them. He was a son of the celebrated Duke d'Epernon, and brother of Bernard de la Vallette, who, under the reign of Louis XII, was condemned to death; he escaped to England, and was therefore only executed in effigy. This verdict was cancelled in the reign of Louis XIV. The family is now extinct.

NOTE (2), *page* 20.

It was also Richelieu who caused the palace-royal to be built that was long called Le Palais Cardinal. It is certain that this great minister patronized all the arts, and that his own genius laid the superstructure of all the brilliance of the succeeding age. He was much reproached for having criticized the Cid through the Academy; but this critique of the Cid, however unjust in some respects, is still excellent in many others, and by the tone of estimation, the moderation, and politeness it mentions throughout, it is a perfect model of the proper manner of writing those kinds of productions. It is very remarkable that our first dramatical *chef-d'œuvre* gave rise to the first good critique which appeared in our language, and that Richelieu has at once encouraged and drawn from obscurity the father of the French theatre, as well as created the severe but brilliant tribunal which pronounced judgment upon them.

Praise is also due to the authors of the critique on the Cid for having evinced sufficient taste to criticize this production of a young poet until then without celebrity, with as much delicacy as consideration, and in a tone as respectful as if they had been written thirty years later. This presage of all the future greatness of Corneille was a homage

equally honourable to the poet and the censors. It was said that Richelieu, from jealousy, had become the enemy of Corneille, who himself thought, as these verses written after the death of this minister must prove:

> Qu'on parle mal ou bien du fameux cardinal,
> Ma prose ni mes vers n'en diront jamais rien;
> Il m'a trop fait de bien pour en dire du mal,
> Il m'a trop fait de mal pour en dire du bien.

It was indeed worthy of a great soul, such as Corneille's,—to forget injury in consideration of the benefits which, not having rejected, he was enjoying when he wrote those verses.

If Richelieu were envious of Corneille, he still evinced towards him great generosity; he did not even withdraw his pensions, but on the contrary, after his success, he awarded him new gifts. No one saw a trace of the *ill* of which Corneille complained. The critique on the Cid by the Academy, as I have already said, was far from being insulting, it was full of respect: Corneille kept his pension and obtained new favours. The representations of the Cid were not interrupted, no kind of cabal disturbed their run. Three years after, and two years before the death of the cardinal, Corneille produced "Les Horaces," and afterwards "Cinna:" both these admirable pieces underwent no criticism; in this procedure there surely appeared

neither persecution nor outrage: however, Fontenelle, in the Life of Corneille, said, that when the Cid appeared, Richelieu, jealous of every species of glory, was as much alarmed as if he had beheld the Spaniards enter Paris, and that he excited all the authors against *this production*. Such declarations are literary exaggerations carried to a ridiculous extent. How is it possible to imagine that the envy, and the power of the master of France, the arbiter of Europe, had only been able to produce what was then acting? With regard to the insurrection of authors, omnipotence was not necessary to excite it; on the contrary, it is much more likely that all his authority would have been scarcely sufficient to repress it. It appeared very unjust to accuse a minister of this base and weak jealousy who loaded all the celebrated artists with rewards, who with so much splendour patronized every species of talent. History is full of calumny, of evidently absurd exaggerations, and unhappily credited too much to be assiduously sought for and refuted. If this were done with truth and candour, it would be an useful and noble labour*; who could be insensible to the glory of justifying

* Such a work might be intitled, "A Refutation of some Historical Calumnies," or "Researches into Historical Calumnies."

a great man if this could be proved merely slander?

NOTE (3), *page* 20.

It was the Cardinal Richelieu who brought Le Poussin to Rome to decorate the great gallery of the Louvre with paintings, and with architecture. He gave him the commission of first artist to the king: Le Poussin arrived at Paris towards the end of 1640. Touquiers, an indifferent painter of landscapes, who is scarcely known except by the nickname of the Baron with the long ears, had also a commission which authorized him, he said, to adorn the gallery with his drawings alone. Le Poussin found in him, and in Lemercier, architect to the king, envious and enraged enemies, who, through their cabals and intrigues, produced so much disgust and so much chagrin, that this great artist embraced the resolution to return to Rome, where he was overtaken with a paralytic attack, at the age of sixty-one years. It is unfortunate that a man of great talents should not have had firmness sufficient to resist his enemies, without being overpowered by them, and that he should not have been sensible that with courage and perseverance, genius will always finally triumph over injustice, cabal, and envy.

Page 31.

See what Madame de Motteville says, in her Memoirs of Mademoiselle de la Fayette.

" This brunette beauty had lovely features and much of the agreeable, she also possessed sweetness and firmness of mind. At once affable yet dignified, she it was whom the king loved, and she it was also to whom he more openly spoke on the subject of the cardinal, and on the vexation his power caused him. As this girl had an excellent heart, (though she foresaw in this confidence the certain ruin of her own fortune,) she did not allow herself to be silent on the subject with the prince; she strengthened his aversion for the cardinal, by the influence of that friendship she bore him, observing, that he was dishonoured in permitting himself to be so much subjected to the influence and government of this minister.

The cardinal was indefatigable in endeavouring to gain over every person who was near the king, but she had more resolution and firmness than all the men at court, who had the baseness to give the minister an account of all the king said against him. A mere girl had a far more noble and dignified soul than they, she had the resolution to brave ill-fortune; the king saw in her as much constancy and virtue as beauty—he esteemed and loved her—and I know that he had for her an

attachment, very much exalted above the common affection of men. The same sentiment which compelled this generous girl to refuse all connexion with the Cardinal de Richelieu, caused her to live discreetly with the queen. As the prudence and propriety of the king almost equalled that of the most modest women; it excited in her so much of gratitude, she thought she ought to repay his virtuous friendship with the greatest fidelity, in keeping the secrets confided to her knowledge." *Madame de Motteville*, vol. I.

By this recital it may be seen that I have not exaggerated the fine character of Mademoiselle de la Fayette; and it is known, that Madame de Motteville is celebrated for her candour and impartiality. Monsieur de Voltaire distinguishes her, and with reason, as—

The sincere Madame de Motteville; and it is impossible, when her memoirs have been read, for the peruser not to discover that she is fully worthy of this distinguishing appellation. She has described Louis with uniform fidelity. I have been compelled to supply in my romance some particulars of this melancholy picture; but I have preserved all the characteristic traits. What a king was he whose confidence one could not accept without being lost! And who would not be tempted

to believe that this last trait is over-drawn, since he made the fortune of his friend the Constable of Luynes, Cinq-Mars, a great squire, &c.? But it was only the cardinal who protected them. The constable died, Cinq-Mars not only was detached from the cardinal, but conspired against him; his tragical end was well known.

NOTE (4), *page* 82.

Boisenval, a subaltern personage, assured of the bond of union between the king and Mademoiselle de la Fayette, betrayed this prince to the cardinal, when he was privately bought over to his interest; and carried those letters that the cardinal had read and re-sealed, without the king entertaining the slightest suspicion of this insolent infidelity. For this refer to the Universal, Historical, and Critical Dictionary, &c. of MM. Chaudom and Delandine, article *La Fayette.*

NOTE (5), *page* 102.

Madame de Motteville expressly says, that the queen was very much hurt by the reserve of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, who would not act as Mademoiselle de Hautefort had previously done,

and report to her majesty all the confidential communications of the king; and that, after this, she was very coldly treated.

Note (6), *page* 127.

This infidelity had already been spoken of; see note (4). The cardinal afterwards permitted more. When Mademoiselle de la Fayette was a *religieuse*, she received the king in her parlour, and wrote to him. He interlined in their letters some shocking words of forged writing, which wounded their delicacy, and which rendered them cold towards each other, and finally disunited them.

Note (7), *page* 128.

Father Caussin, the king's confessor, told Madame de Motteville, that, instead of the cardinal adhering to inspiring the king with scruples of conscience, and causing La Fayette to retire from court, he advised her, being sensible of the innocence of her own intention, not to become a nun, but to remain at court, &c.

Thus this *religieuse* was truly incorruptible. If he had wished to make a great fortune in the

church, he had a fine pretence to parley with his own conscience in appearing austere and rigid; but he acted only after his own ideas, and at the risk of making the most powerful and the most redoubtable enemies.

Note (8), *page* 144.

This saint, this hero, so sublime in christian charity, extended it even to criminals. Having one day met a galley-slave compelled to abandon his wife and children in great poverty, he obtained his liberty by surrendering himself in his place, and he long carried the chain from which he had delivered him. Many pious persons being acquainted with this act, released him from the galleys; but the enormous weight of the chains that he had borne, entailed upon him for life, a considerable swelling of the feet. Afterwards, at his own request, he was nominated chaplain to the galleys: he assuaged the fate of those unhappy beings, and consoled them by sweet exhortations; he established a hospital for them at Marseilles— until then there had been none. On his return to France, he visited criminals in their prisons, and by his endeavours, he rendered their fate less miserable. He established the first of the mis-

sionaries to instruct and preach in the different places, and to bear the light of the gospel among the infidels. He founded a Hospital for the Aged, l'Hôtel-Dieu, the Hospital for Foundlings, and the Congregation of the Daughters of the Cross, for the education of poor girls. He established also les Sœurs de Charité. In 1639, he sold every thing he possessed, and sent the produce into Lorraine, which had been ruined by the war: he joined to this gift some considerable alms which he collected from the court, and from different people; these alms, sent repeatedly at different times, amounted to sixteen hundred thousand francs. Besides, he procured subistence and asylums for many emigrants of Lorraine; he exercised the same charity in regard to the Scotch and the English catholics persecuted in their own country; soon after he did the same for the poor inhabitants of the frontiers of Champagne, and Picardy, ruined by the war. He distributed among them the amount of six hundred thousand francs. He also dispensed some immense charities in the town of Etampes, devastated by the encampment of the army, and by an epidemic disorder. This excellent Saint died at an advanced age, in 1660.*

* I have already mentioned in my Journal Imaginaire, the subline discourse of St. Vincent, which I proposed for the subject of a picture. I could not avoid re-

NOTE (9,) *page* 174.

Madame de Motteville thus recounts the disgrace of Mademoiselle de Hautefort. She reports this person as having an imperious character, which, in the end, became insupportable to the queen; she had displayed great proofs of attachment at the time of the persecution. The cardinal caused the queen to suffer; she went disguised as a servant with much danger into a prison, to give at the gate some important advice for her majesty to the valet de chambre who was to be questioned about her. I have supposed that Mademoiselle de la Fayette had caused the recall of Mademoiselle de Hautefort from exile, but the latter did not in reality return to court until after the death of the king.

NOTE (10), *page* 188.

Louis XIV. was not born till after the departure of Mademoiselle de la Fayette; but all the memoirs of Madame de Motteville agree in affirming, that the reunion of the king and queen was effected by her, and consequently the birth of Louis the Great.

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tracing in this work a character so marked and celebrated, and the more as this repetition occupies in this book only half a page.

NOTE (11), *page* 200.

It is true that the king wrote this letter and tendered this strange proposal, which aroused Mademoiselle to a sense of the passion of this prince, and determined her to become a nun. *See the Universal Dictionary*, the article *La Fayette*. She took the veil only with the consent of the king, which Father Caussin was commissioned to request. The king wept, evinced the liveliest grief, but gave his consent. He went in fact to see her at the convent for a long time afterwards, but he could not, says Madame de Motteville, tear her from the grate. The cardinal became more restless than ever, and it was then that he falsified their letters, as I have already noted. (6.)

NOTE (12), *page* 240.

The abdication proposed to Mademoiselle de la Fayette, is not a mere supposition; Madame de Motteville decisively mentions it. She derived this information from Mademoiselle herself, whom she often saw at her convent after the death of the king.

FINIS.

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